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Carità.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE.



ARA'S second evening at home was passed much more happily than the first, thanks to Mrs. Meredith, and her spirits rose in consequence; but next morning there ensued a fall, as was natural, in her spiritual barometer. She went to the window in the drawing-room when she was all alone, and gazed wistfully at as much as she could see of the step and entrance of the house next door. Did they mean her to "run in half-a-dozen times a day," as Mrs. Meredith had said? Cara had been brought up in her aunt's old-fashioned notions, with strenuous injunctions not "to make herself cheap," and to cultivate "a proper pride." She had often been told that running into sudden intimacy was foolish, and that a girl should be rather shy than eager about overtures of ordinary friendship. All these things restrained her, and her own disposition which favoured all reserves. But

she could not help going to the window and looking out wistfully. Only a wall between them! and how much more cheerful it was on the other side of that wall. Her heart beat as she saw Oswald come out

not because it was Oswald—on the whole she would have preferred his mother; but solitude ceased to be solitude when friendly figures thus appear, even outside. Oswald glanced up and saw her. He took off his hat—he paused—finally, he turned and came up the steps just underneath where she was standing. In another moment he came in, his hat in his hand, his face full of the brightness of the morning. Nurse showed him in with a sort of affectionate enthusiasm. “Here is Mr. Oswald, Miss Cara, come to see you.”

The women servants were all the slaves of the handsome young fellow. Wherever he went he had that part of the community on his side.

“I came to see that you are not the worse for your dull dinner last evening,” he said. “It used to be etiquette to ask for one’s partner at a ball; how much more after a domestic evening. Have you a headache? were you very much bored? It is for my interest to know, that I may be able to make out whether you will come again.”

“Were *you* bored that you ask me?” said Cara. “I was very happy.”

“And, thanks to you, *I* was very happy,” he said. “Clearly four are better company than three. Your father and my mother have their own kind of talking. Why I have not been in this room since I was a child; how much handsomer it is than ours! Come, Cara, tell me all about the pictures and the china. Of course you must be a little connoisseur. Should one say *connoisseuse*? I never know. *Virtuosa*, that is a prettier word, and we are all in the way of the cardinal virtues here.”

“But I am not at all a *virtuosa*. I don’t know. I was a child, too, when I used to be at home, and I suppose it hurts papa to come into this room. He has never been here since I came; never at all, I think, since mamma died.”

“Does he leave you by yourself all the evening? what a shame!” said Oswald. “Is he so full of sentiment as that? One never knows people. Come, Cara, if that is the case, it is clear that I must spend the evenings with you.”

Cara laughed frankly at the suggestion. She did not understand what he meant by a slight emphasis upon the pronouns, which seemed to point out some balance of duties. She said, “I have only been here for two evenings. The first was very dull. I had nothing to read but that book, and I was not happy. The second was last night. Oh, I am not accustomed to much company. I can be quite happy by myself, when I am used to things.”

“That means you don’t want me,” said Oswald, “but I shall come all the same. What is the book about? You don’t mean to say you understand that! What is unconscious cerebration, Cara? Good heavens! how rash I have been. Are you an F.R.S. already, like the rest of your father’s friends?”

"I don't know what it means," said Cara, "no more than I know about the china. But I read a chapter that first night; it was always something. You see there are very few books in this room. They have been taken away, I suppose. Nobody, except mamma, has ever lived here."

She gave a little shiver as she spoke, and looked wistfully round. Even in the morning, with the sunshine coming in, how still it was! Oswald thought he would like to break the china, and make a human noise, over the head of the father who was sitting below, making believe to think so much of the memory of his dead wife, and neglecting his living child. The young man had a grudge against the elder one, which gave an edge to his indignation.

"You shall have books," he said, "and company too, if you will have me, Cara: that will bring them to their senses," he added to himself in a half-laughing, half-angry undertone.

What did he mean? Cara had no idea. She laughed too, with a little colour starting to her face, wondering what Aunt Charity would think if she knew that Oswald meant to spend his evenings with her. Cara herself did not see any harm in it, though she felt it was a joke, and could not be.

"You were going out," she said, "when you saw me at the window. Had you anything to do? for if you had you must not stay and waste your time with me."

"Why should I have anything to do?"

"I thought young men had," said Cara. "Of course I don't know very much about them. I know only the Burchells *well*; they are never allowed to come and talk in the morning. If it is Reginald, he always says he ought to be reading; and Roger, he is of course at work, you know."

"I don't know in the least," said Oswald; "but I should like to learn. What does this revelation of Rogers and Reginalds mean? I never supposed there were any such persons. I thought that Edward and myself were about the limit of friendship allowed to little Cara, and here is a clan, a tribe. I forewarn you at once that I put myself in opposition to your Reginalds and Rogers. I dislike the gentlemen. I am glad to hear that they have no time to talk in the mornings. I, for my part, have plenty of time."

"Oh, you are not likely to know them," said Cara, laughing, "unless, indeed, Roger comes on Sundays, as he said. They are probably not so rich as you are. Their father is a clergyman, and they have to work. I should like that myself better than doing nothing."

"That means," said Oswald, with great show of savagery, setting his teeth, "that you prefer the said Roger who must not talk o'mornings, to me, presumably not required to work? Know then, young lady, that I have as much need to work as your Roger; more, for I mean to be somebody. If I go in for the bar it is with the intention of being Lord

Chancellor; and that wants work—work! such as would take the very breath away from your clergyman's sons, who probably intend to be mere clergymen, and drop into a fat living."

"Roger is an engineer," said Cara; "he is at the College; he walks about with chains, measuring. I don't know what is the good of it, but I suppose it is of some good. There are so many things," she added, with a sigh, "that one is obliged to take for granted. Some day, I suppose, he will have bridges and lighthouses to make. That one can understand—that would be worth doing."

"I hate Roger!" said Oswald. "I shall never believe in any lighthouses of his making; there will be a flaw in them. Do you remember the Eddystone, which came down ever so often? Roger's will tumble down. I know it. And when you have seen it topple over into the sea you shall come and see me tranquilly seated on the woolsack, and recant all your errors."

Upon which they both laughed—not that there was much wit in the suggestion, but they were both young, and the one lighted up the other with gay gleams of possible mirth.

"However," said Oswald, "that we may not throw that comparison to too remote a period, where do you think I was going? Talk of me as an idler, if you please. Does this look like idling?" He took from his pocket a little roll of paper, carefully folded, and breaking open the cover showed her a number of MS. pages, fairly copied out in graduated lines. Cara's face grew crimson with sudden excitement.

"*Poetry!*" she said; but capital letters would scarcely convey all she meant. "Oswald, are you a poet?"

He laughed again, which jarred upon her feelings, for poetry (she felt) was not a thing to laugh at. "I write verses," he said; "that is idling—most people call it so, Cara, as well as you."

"But I would *never* call it so! Oh, Oswald, if there is anything in the world I care for——. Read me some, will you? Oh, do read me something. There is nothing," cried Cara, her lips trembling, her eyes expanding, her whole figure swelling with a sigh of feeling, "nothing I care for so much. I would rather know a poet than a king!"

Upon this Oswald laughed again, and looked at her with kind admiration. His eyes glowed, but with a brotherly light. "You are a little enthusiast," he said. "I called you *virtuosa*, and you are one in the old-fashioned sense, for that is wider than bric-a-brac. Yes; I sometimes think I might be a poet if I had any one to inspire me, to keep me away from petty things. I am my mother's son, Cara. I like to please everybody, and that is not in favour of the highest pursuits. I want a Muse. What if you were born to be my Muse? You shall see some of the things that are printed," he added; "not these. I am more sure of them when they have attained the reality of print."

"Then they are printed?" Cara's eyes grew bigger and bigger, her interest grew to the height of enthusiasm. "How proud your mother

must be, Oswald! I wonder she did not tell me. Does Edward write, too?"

"Edward!" cried the other with disdain; "a clodhopper; a plodding, steady, respectable fellow, who has passed for the Civil Service. Poetry would be more sadly in his way than it is in mine. Oh, yes, it is sadly in mine. My mother does not know much; but instead of being enthusiastic she is annoyed with what she does know. That is the kind of thing one has to meet with in this world," he said, with a sigh over his own troubles. "Sometimes there is one like you—one more generous, more capable of appreciating the things that do not pay—with some people the things that pay are everything. And poetry does not pay, Cara."

"I don't like you even to say so."

"Thanks for caring what I say; you have an eye for the ideal. I should like to be set on a pedestal, and to have something better expected from me. That is how men are made, Cara. To know that some one—a creature like yourself—expects something, thinks us capable of something. I am talking sentiment," he said, with a laugh; "decidedly you are the Muse I am looking for. On a good pedestal, with plenty of white muslin, there is not a Greek of them all would come up to you."

"I don't know what you mean, Oswald. Now you are laughing at me."

"Well, let us laugh," he said, putting his papers into his pocket again. "Are you coming to my mother's reception this afternoon? I hear you were there yesterday. What do you think of it? Was old Somerville there with his wig? He is the guardian angel; he comes to see that we all go on as we ought, and that no one goes too far. He does not approve of me. He writes to India about me that I will never be of much use in the world."

"To India?"

"Yes; all the information about us goes out there. Edward gives satisfaction, but not the rest of us. It is not easy to please people so far off who have not you to judge, but only your actions set down in black and white. Well, I suppose I must go now—my actions don't tell for much: 'Went into the house next door, and got a great deal of good from little Cara.' That would not count, you see; not even if I put down, 'Cheered up little Cara, who was mopish.' Might I say that?"

"Yes, indeed; you have cheered me up very much," said Cara, giving him her hand. Oswald stooped over her a moment, and the girl thought he was going to kiss her, which made her retreat a step backwards, her countenance flaming, and all the shy dignity and quick wrath of her age stirred into movement. But he only laughed and squeezed her hand, and ran downstairs, his feet ringing young and light through the vacant house. Cara would have gone to the window and looked after him but for that—was it a threatening of a visionary kiss? How silly she was! Of course he did not mean anything of the kind.

If he did, it was just as if she had been his sister, and Cara felt that her momentary alarm showed her own silliness, a girl that had never been used to anything. How much an only child lost by being an only child, she reflected gravely, sitting down after he left her by the fire. How pleasant it would have been to have a brother like Oswald. And if he should be a poet! But this excited Cara more when he was talking to her than after he was gone. He did not fall in with her ideas of the poet, who was a being of angelic type to her imagination, not a youth with laughter glancing from his eyes.

That evening Cara sat solitary after dinner, the pretty silver lamp lighted, with its white moon-orb of light upon the table by her; the fire burning just bright enough for company, for it still was not cold. She had said, timidly, "Shall you come upstairs this evening, papa?" and had received a mildly evasive answer, and she thought about nine o'clock that she heard the hall door shut, just as John came into the room with tea. She thought the man looked at her compassionately, but she would not question him. The room looked very pretty in the firelight and lamplight, with the little tray gleaming in all its brightness of china and silver, and the little white figure seated by the fire; but it was very lonely. She took up a book a little more interesting than the one which had been her first resource, but presently let it drop on her knee wondering and asking herself, Would Oswald come? Perhaps he had forgotten; perhaps he had noticed her shrink when he went away, and, meaning nothing by his gesture, did not know why she had retreated from him—perhaps—. But who could tell what might have stopped him? A boy was not like a girl—he might have been asked somewhere. He might have gone to the theatre. Perhaps he had a club, and was there among his friends. All this passed through her head as she sat with the book in her hand, holding it open on her knee. Then she began to read, and forgot for the minute; then suddenly the book dropped again, and she thought, with a sort of childish longing, of what might be going on next door, just on the other side of the wall, where everything was sure to be so cheerful. If she only could pierce that unkindly wall, and see through! That made her think of Pyramus and Thisbe, and she smiled, but soon grew grave again. Was this how she was to go on living—lonely all the evening through, her father seeking society somewhere else, she could not tell where? She thought of the drawing-room at the Hill, and her eyes grew wet; how they would miss her there! and here nobody wanted Cara. Her father, perhaps, might think it right that his child should live under his roof; but that was all he cared apparently; and was it to be always thus, and never change? at seventeen it is so natural to think that everything that is, is unalterable and will never change. Then Cara, with a gulp, and a determination to be as happy as she could in the terrible circumstances, and above all, to shun Oswald, who had not kept his word, opened her book again, and this time got into the story, which had been prefaced by various interludes of philosophising,

and remembered no more till Nurse came to inquire if she did not mean to go to bed to-night. So the evening did not hang so heavy on her hands as she thought.

Next day Oswald came again, and told her of a forgotten engagement which he had been obliged to keep; and they chattered gaily as before; and he brought her some poems, printed in a magazine, which sounded beautiful when he read them, to her great delight, but did not seem so beautiful when she read them over herself, as she begged she might be allowed to do. After this there was a great deal of intercourse between the two houses, and Cara's life grew brighter. Now and then, it was true, she would be left to spend an evening alone; but she got other friends, and went to some parties with Mrs. Meredith, Oswald attending them. He was always about; he came and had long private talks with her, reading his verses and appealing to her sympathies and counsel; he walked with her when she went out with his mother; he was always by her side wherever they went. "I know Edward will cut me out when he comes, so I must make the running now," he said often, and Cara no longer wondered what making the running meant. She got so used to his presence that it seemed strange when he was not there.

"It's easy to see what that will end in," said Nurse to John and Cook in the kitchen.

"I wish as one could see what the other would end in," Cook replied. But the household watched the two young people with proud delight, going to the window to look at them when they went out, and rejoicing over the handsome couple.

"I always said as our Miss Cara was one as would settle directly," her faithful attendant said. "Seventeen! it's too young, that is, for anything."

"But he haven't got a penny," said Cook, who was more prudent, "and he don't do nothing. I'd like a man as could work for me, if I was Miss Cara."

"I'd like him better if he hadn't no call to work," said Nurse, with true patrician feeling.

But the chief parties knew nothing of these remarks. They were very cheerful and full of mutual confidences. Oswald confiding to Cara his doubts and difficulties, his aspirations (which were chiefly in verse) and light-hearted anticipations, not going so far as to be called hopes, of sitting one day on the woolsack. Cara, though she had a great respect for Oswald, did not think much about the woolsack. But it was astonishing how she got used to him, how she liked him, and, notwithstanding the occasional dull evenings, how much more variety seemed to have come into her life. Sometimes Mrs. Meredith herself would talk to the girl about her son.

"If he would work more steadily I should be happier, Cara," she would say; "and perhaps if he had a strong inducement he would work. He is so clever, and able to do what he likes."

Cara did not know about this; but she liked his lively company. They were the best of friends; they talked to each other of every foolish thing that comes into the heads of young people; but she had a vague idea that he did not talk to her as the others thought he did. He was not like Roger even; though Roger was no more like him than night was like day. Roger was—different. She could not have told how, and nobody knew of this difference nor spoke to her on the subject. And thus life floated on very pleasantly, with more excitement than had existed in that placid school-girl life at the Hill. Miss Cherry came two or three times on a day's visit to her darling, and observed what was going on and was puzzled; but Aunt Charity had her first attack of bronchitis that year, and it was winter weather, not good for travelling.

"Yes, I think she is happy on the whole," was Miss Cherry's report to the elder aunt when she went home—which, as may be supposed, was not a clear enough deliverance for Aunt Charity.

"Is the young man in love with her?" said the old lady; "is she in love with him? James should not be such a fool as to let them be constantly together, unless it is a match that would please him."

"James is not thinking of anything of the kind," said Miss Cherry, impatiently. "James is taken up with his own affairs, and he thinks Cara a little girl still."

"To be sure he does—that is where men always go wrong," said Aunt Charity, "and James will always be a fool to the end of the chapter."

Cherry winced at this, for she was the model of a good sister, and never had seen any man who was so much her ideal as James—though in some things he was foolish, she was obliged to allow. Perhaps, as Aunt Charity was ill, and the house, as it were, shut up and given over to invalidism for the winter, it was as well that Cara should be away, getting some enjoyment of her young life. Had she been at home it would have been dull for her, for Miss Cherry was in almost constant attendance upon the old lady. Thus things had turned out very well, as they so often do, even when they look least promising. Had Cara been at the Hill, Miss Cherry would not have been so free to devote herself to Aunt Charity, and both the child and the old lady would have suffered. True, Miss Cherry's own life might have had a little additional brightness, but who thought of that? She did not herself, and you may be sure no one else did. It was altogether a fortunate arrangement, as things had turned out, and as for Cara, why, was there not Providence to watch over her, if her father was remiss? Miss Cherry felt that there was something like infidelity in the anxious desire she felt sometimes to go and help Providence in this delicate task.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE OLD PEOPLE.

WHEN Mrs. Beresford died, as has been described, there was a great flutter of talk and private discussion among all who knew her about the particulars of her death. It was "so sudden at the last," after giving every indication of turning out a lingering and slow malady, that public curiosity was very greatly excited on the subject. True, the talk was suppressed peremptorily by Mr. Maxwell whenever he came across it, charitably by other less authoritative judges; but it lingered, as was natural, and perhaps the bereaved husband did not have all that fulness of sympathy which generally attends so great a loss. There were many people, indeed, to whom it appeared that such a loss was worse even than a more simple and less mysterious one, and that the survivor was entitled to more instead of less pity; but mysterious circumstances always damp the public sympathy more or less, and people do not like to compromise themselves by kindness which might seem complicity or guilty knowledge, if in the course of time, anything not known at the moment should be found out. Thus James Beresford, though much pitied, did not meet with that warmth of personal sympathy which circumstances like his so often call forth. He was not himself sensible of it indeed, being too miserable to take any notice of what was going on around him; but most of his friends were fully sensible of this fact, and aware that but few overtures of active kindness were made to the melancholy man, whose very abandonment of his home and life made another item in the mysterious indictment against him, of which everybody felt the burden yet nobody knew the rights. It was in these painful circumstances that Mrs. Meredith first formed the link which now associated her with her next door neighbour. The first time he had come home after his wife's death, which was only for a week or two, the kind woman had met him, indeed had laid her simple, tender-hearted plan to meet him—going listlessly into his forsaken house. She had gone up to him, bolding out her hand, her features all moved and quivering with feeling. "Won't you come in and sit with me in the evening?" she said. "It is the time one feels one's loneliness most—and my boys are away, Mr. Beresford." Her soft eyes, as she raised them to him, were full of tears; her look so pitiful, so full of fellow-feeling, that his heart was as much touched for her as hers seemed to be for him. Of all ways of consolation is there any so effective as that of leading those whom you grieve for to grieve also a little for you, as a fellow-sufferer? His heart was touched. He could not persuade himself to go the very first evening, but he came soon, and when he had come once returned again and again. It was the first new habit he formed after that mournful breaking-up of all his habits. He could not bear much at

a time of the dismal place which he still called home ; but now and then he was forced to be there, and when he came this new sweet habit gave him a little strength to meet the chaos into which his life otherwise was thrown. Did not Dante, too, get a little comfort from the sweet looks of that sympathising woman who used to glance at him from her window after the lady of his heart was carried by the angels to heaven ? There was no wrong to his Annie in that refuge which kindness made for him from the miseries of the world. Eventually it became a matter of course that he should seek that shelter. He went out of his own house and knocked at her door mechanically, and would sit by her, content only to be there, often saying little, getting himself softly healed and soothed, and made capable of taking up again the burden of his life. She was not the same kind of woman as his wife—her habits of mind were different. The variety, the fluctuating charm, the constant movement and change that were in Mrs. Beresford did not exist in this other. She would sit and work by the lamplight, looking up sweetly to answer, but happy to be silent if her companion liked it. She made herself always the second and not the first, responding, not leading ; her gift was to divine what was in others, to follow where they went. It was this that made her so popular with all her friends. When they came to her for advice she would give it without that doubt and fear of responsibility which restrains so many people. For why ? she had a rule which was infallible, and which made her safe from responsibility, although she was not herself aware how closely she acted upon it. Her infallible guide was a faculty of seeing what people themselves wished, how their own judgments were tending, and what individually they wanted to do. This she followed sometimes consciously, but often quite unconsciously, as habit led her, and she was never afraid of saying *Do this*, or *Do that*. It was one of her great attractions. She might be wise or she might be less than wise, in her decisions, her friends said, but she never shilly-shallied, never was afraid of saying to you with sweet frankness and boldness what she thought it would be good to do.

The consequence of this simple rule was that good advice from Mrs. Meredith's lips was ever so much more popular than good advice had ever been known to be before. It is not a commodity which is generally admired, however admirable it may be ; but those whom she advised were not only edified but flattered and brightened. It made themselves feel more wise. It was sweet at once to the giver and to the receiver, and kindled an increased warmth of sympathy between them. Now and then, to be sure, the course of action she recommended might not be a successful one, but is not that the case with all human counsel ? This, which was the secret of her power with all her other friends, subjugated James Beresford too. As there is nothing so dear to a man as his own way, so there is no individual so dear as that friend who will recommend and glorify his own way to him, and help him to enjoyment of it. This she did with a gentle patience and constancy which was wonderful.

It was natural to her, like all great gifts, and the great charm of it all was that few people suspected the reflection from their own feelings and sentiments which coloured Mrs. Meredith's mind, nor was she at all invariably aware of it herself. Sometimes she believed implicitly in her own advice as the natural growth of her own thoughts and experiences, and believed herself to have an independent judgment. And it is to be supposed that she had opinions and ideas—certainly she had ways of her own, the brightest, and kindest, and most caressing that could be conceived.

This was the secret of those absences which had left Cara so lonely. They had become now the confirmed and constant habit of her father's life. And it would be vain to say that this had been done without remark. While he was at home for a week or two only in a year no one said anything about his frequent visits to the kind neighbour who was not even a widow; but lately he had stayed longer when he came back to the Square, sometimes remaining a month instead of a week, and now it was understood that he had returned "for good." Both Mrs. Meredith and Mr. Beresford had, it may be supposed, friends who took the responsibility of their conduct, and thought it necessary to supervise them in their innocent but unusual intimacy, and these excellent persons were in the attitude of suspended judgment waiting to see what difference Cara's presence would make, and that of Oswald, in the one house and the other. But it had not as yet made any very apparent difference. At nine o'clock, or thereabouts, the door would shut in the one house, and Cook and John would exchange glances; while in the other the bell would tinkle, and the two maids, who divided John's duties between them, would say, "There is Mr. Beresford, as usual!" and shrug their shoulders. He came in, and they did not take the trouble now even to announce the habitual visitor, who had his special chair and his special corner, as if he belonged to the house. Sometimes the two friends would talk long and much, sometimes they scarcely talked at all. They knew each other like brother and sister, and yet there was between them a delicate separation such as does not exist between relations. In the warm room, softly lighted and friendly, the man who had been wounded found a refuge which was more like the old blessedness of home than anything else could be, and yet was not that blessedness. It did not occur to him that because his daughter had come back to him he was to be banished from this other shelter. Cara's coming, indeed, had scarcely been her father's doing. Many discussions on the point had taken place among all his friends, and Mrs. Meredith had been spurred up by everybody to represent his duty to him. She had done it with a faint sense in her mind that it would affect herself in some undesirable way, and with a certainty that she was departing altogether from her usual rule of argument with the personal wishes of her clients. Mr. Beresford had no personal wish on the subject. He preferred rather that Cara should stay where she was happy. "If she comes here what can I do for her?"

he said. "My society is not what a girl will like. I cannot take her to the dances and gaieties which will please her."

"Why not?" Mrs. Meredith had said.

"Why not!" He was petrified by her want of perception. "What could I do in such places? And she is happy where she is. She has women about her who know how to manage her. Her coming would derange my life altogether. You, who feel everybody's difficulties, you must feel this. What am I to do with a girl of seventeen? It would be wretched for her, and it could not be any addition to my happiness."

"Don't you think too much of that," said Mrs. Meredith, faltering; for indeed this was not at all her way. And it was hard for her to go against those feelings on the part of her companion which, on ordinary occasions, she followed implicitly. Even for herself Cara's presence would complicate the relations generally; but when she saw her duty, she did it, though with faltering. Everybody else had spurred and goaded her up to this duty, and she would not shrink. "If you are going to settle, you ought to have your child with you."

"That you should dwell like this upon abstract oughts!" said Mr. Beresford; "you, who are so full of understanding of personal difficulties. It is not like you. If I feel that Cara is better where she is—happier, more suitably cared for——"

"Still, you know when the father is settled at home, his only child should be with him," Mrs. Meredith reiterated. She was faithful to her *consigne*. If she did not see it, other people did, for whom she was the mouthpiece. But it will be perceived that those persons were right who said she was not clever. When she was not following her favourite and congenial pursuit of divining others and reflecting them in her own person, she was reduced to this helpless play of reiteration, and stuck to her one point till everybody was tired of it. Beresford was so impatient that he got up from his chair and began to pace up and down the room.

"There is reason in all things," he said. "My house now is emphatically a bachelor house, my servants suit me, my life is arranged as I like it, or at least as I can support it best. Cara would make a revolution in everything. What should I do with her? How should I amuse her? for, of course, she would want amusement. And she is happy, quite happy, where she is; nowhere could she be so well as she is now. My aunt and my sister are wrapt up in her. Yes, yes, of course I am fond of my poor little girl; but what could I do with her? You are always so reasonable—but not here."

"She should be with her father," said Mrs. Meredith, sticking to her *consigne*; and of course he thought it was perversity and opposition, and never divined what it cost her to maintain, against all her habits of mind, the opposite side. When, however, it appeared by the Sunninghill letters that the ladies there took the same view, Mr. Beresford had no more to say. He yielded, but not with a good grace. "You shall have

your will," he said; "but Cara will not be happy." He did not take Oswald Meredith into consideration, or any such strange influence; and as for changing his own habits, how was that to be thought of? Life was hard enough anyhow, with all the alleviations which fate permitted. Did any one suppose that a girl of seventeen, whom he scarcely knew, could be made into a companion for him by the mere fact that she was his daughter? No: his mornings, which were occupied with what he called hard work; his afternoons, which he spent among his serious friends in his clubs and learned societies; and that evening hour, most refreshing to his soul of any, in which the truest sympathy, the tenderest kindness proved a cordial which kept him alive—which of these, was it to be supposed, he would give up for the society of little Cara? He was very glad to give her all that was wanted for her comfort—a good careful attendant, plenty of dresses and pocket-money, and so forth; but he could not devote himself, surely (who could expect it?), to the society of a child. That any one should expect this gave him even a little repulsion from, a half prejudice against her. When she appeared, with that serious, half-disapproving look of hers, and when he realised her, seated upstairs in that drawing-room which he had never entered since her mother's death, among all her mother's relics, recalling to him at once a poignant sense of his loss and a sharp thrill of conscious pain, in having so far surmounted that loss and put it behind him, the impulse of separation came still more strongly upon him. He shut himself up in his study more determinedly in the morning, and in the evening had more need than ever of the consoling visits which wound him up and kept his moral being in harmony. He had to ask Mrs. Meredith her advice and her opinion, and to ask even her guidance in respect to Cara. Who could tell him so well what to do with a girl as the kindest and best of women? Oswald, who had been at home for some time, did not like these visits so well as his mother did. No one ever suggested to the young man that he was *de trop*; but to be sure there were pauses in their conversation when this third person was present, and allusions would be made which he did not understand. So that latterly he had been out or in the library downstairs when Mr. Beresford came; very often out, which Mrs. Meredith did not like, but did not know how to prevent, for to be sure she felt the embarrassment also of her son's slight disapproval, and of the restraint his presence produced. Why should he cause a restraint? her boy! but she felt that he did so, and it made her unhappy. It was pleasanter in the former evenings, when Mr. Beresford came home only now and then, and there was neither a Cara nor an Oswald to perplex the simple state of affairs.

"How is she to amuse herself?" Mr. Beresford said to her. "Yes, yes, I know you will do what you can—when was there ever a time when you did not do what you could and more?—but I cannot take her about, I cannot have any one in the house to keep her company, and how is she to live there, a young girl, alone?"

"I think Cara will do very well," said Mrs. Meredith. "She can always come to me. I have told her so; and the people we know are all beginning to call. She will soon have plenty of friends. People will invite her, and you must go with her here and there."

"I go with her? You know how I hate going out!"

"Once at least—say only once. You must do that, and then you will find Cara will have her own friends; she will not be a difficulty any longer. I am glad you trust in me to do what I can for her—and Oswald."

"Of course I trust in you," he said; "but it will break up everything. I know it will—after coming to a kind of calm, after feeling that I can settle down again, and that life is not utterly distasteful to me—You will not wonder that I should be frightened for everything. And you, who have done so much for me."

"I have not done anything," said Mrs. Meredith, looking up smiling from her book.

"You say so, but it is you who have done everything; and if I am to be plucked from my refuge now, and pitched forth upon the world—I believe I am a coward. I shrink from mere outside intercourse, from being knocked up against one and another, and shut out from what I prize most."

"How can that be?" she said; "you get fretful, you men, when everything does not go as you wish. Have a little patience. When Oswald came home, it seemed at first as if he, dear boy, was going to upset all my habits; but it was a vain fear. The first little strangeness is over, and he has settled down; and we are happy—happier than ever. It will be the same with Cara and you."

Beresford gave a half-groan of dissent. I fear Mrs. Meredith saw that it had a double meaning, and that it expressed a certain impatience of her son as well as of his daughter; but this was one of the things which she would not see.

"Yes," she said, with a little nod of her head, "I will answer for it, it will be just the same with Cara and you."

Mr. Beresford gave a little snort at this of absolute dissatisfaction. "I don't like changes of any kind," he said; "when we have got to be tolerably well in this dismal world, why not be content with it, and stop there? *Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien*. How true that is! and yet what can be better than well? I dislike changes, and this almost more than any other. I foresee it will bring me a thousand troubles—not to you, I hope," he said, his voice slightly faltering; "it would be unbearable indeed if it brought any trouble to you."

"Cara cannot bring any trouble to me," she said brightly; "of that I am sure enough: you are making a ghost of the dearest child. By and by you will see how sweet she is and how good."

"All girls have a way of being sweet and good," he said cynically, which was a mood quite uncongenial to him and out of his way.

"That is not like you," said Mrs. Meredith.

He knew it was not. The thought had passed through his own mind that the saying was ungenerous and unworthy of him, and unworthy of utterance in her presence. What could any man be worth who could utter one of those foolish stock taunts against women in any stage of life, before a woman who was to him the queen of friends, the essence of everything consolatory and sweet. "You are always right," he replied hastily, "and I am wrong, as a matter of course. I am out of sorts. I had but just caught hold of life again and found it practicable, and here seems something that may unsettle all; but I am wrong, it is almost certain, and you must be right."

"That is a delightful sentiment—for me; but I am sure of my ground about Cara. Oh, quite sure!" she said, "as sure—as I am of my own boys."

Beresford did not say anything, but he breathed a short impatient sigh. Her boys were all very well at a distance. When they had been absent he had been fond of them, and had shared in the sentiment expressed by all Mrs. Meredith's friends, of regret for their absence; but when a small share even of a woman's company has become one of your daily comforts it is difficult not to find her grown-up son in your way. He reflected upon this as he shook hands with her, and went back to his dwelling-place next door with a consciousness of impatience which was quite unjustifiable. To be sure her grown-up son had a right to her which nothing could gainsay, and was, in a sort of a way, master of the house under her, and might even have a kind of right to show certain mild objections and dislikes to special visitors. Mr. Beresford could not deny these privileges of a son; but they galled him, and there was in his mind an unexpressed irritation against those troublesome members of the new generation who would thrust themselves in the way of their elders, and tread upon their heels perpetually. Children were much pleasanter than these grown-up young people. He did not see the use of them. Cara, for instance, though it was supposed she was to keep house for her father, of what use was she in the house? Cook (naturally) knew a hundred times more than she did, and kept everything going as on wheels. As for Oswald Meredith, who had been a sprightly and delightful boy, what was he now!—an idle young man about town, quite beyond his mother's management; doing nothing, probably good for nothing, idling away the best years of his life. Why did not she send him to India, as he was doing so little here? What an ease to everybody concerned that would be! He thought of it in the most philosophical way, as good for everybody, best for the young man—a relief to his mother's anxieties, a thing which his best friends must desire. What a pity that it could not be done at once! But it would scarcely be good policy on his part to suggest it to Oswald's mother. She might think he had other motives; and what motive could he have except to promote the welfare of the son of such a kind friend?

CHAPTER XV.

ROGER.

ROGER BURCHELL had set his mind steadily, from the moment of Cara's translation to her father's house, upon spending those Sundays, which he had hitherto passed at home, with his aunt at Notting Hill. But the rest of the world has a way of throwing obstacles in the path of heroes of twenty in a quite incredible and heartless manner. It was not that the authorities at the Rectory made any serious objections. There was so many of them that one was not missed—and Roger was not one of the more useful members of the family. He had no voice, for one thing, and therefore was useless in church; and he declined Sunday-school work, and was disposed to be noisy, and disturbed the attention of the little ones; therefore he could be dispensed with at home, and nobody cared to interfere with his inclinations. Neither had the aunt at Notting Hill any objection to Roger—he was a friendly boy, willing to take a quiet walk, ready to be kind to those who were kind to him—and to have somebody to share her solitary Sunday's dinner, and make her feel like other people when she went to church, was pleasant to her. He was a boy who never would want to shirk morning church, or keep the servants from it, to get him a late breakfast, like so many young men. But accident, not evil intention, came in Roger's way. His aunt fell ill, and then something went wrong at the Engineering College, and leave was withheld—entirely by caprice or mistake, for Roger, of course, was sure of being entirely innocent, as such youthful sufferers generally are. The upshot was, that his first Sunday in London did not really occur until Cara had been a whole month in her new home. How he chafed and fretted under this delay it is unnecessary to tell. It seemed to him an age since that October afternoon when the sun was so warm on the Hill, and Cara stood by his side looking over the country in its autumn tints, and watching the shadows fly and the lights gleam over St. George's. What a long time it was! the mellow autumn had stolen away into the fogs of winter; November is but the next month, yet what a difference there is between its clammy chills, and the thick air that stifles and chokes you, and that warmth and sunny glow with which red-breasted October sings the fall of the leaves and the gathering-in of the fruit! And in that time how much might have happened. Had it been dreary for her all by herself in London, separated from her friends? or had she found new people to keep her cheerful, and forgotten the friends of her youth? These were the questions the lad asked himself as he went up to town from Berkshire, on the evening of Saturday, the 25th of November. All that he had heard of since she left had been from a letter which Miss Cherry had read to his sister Agnes, and from which it appeared that Cara felt London lonely and regretted her friends in the country. "How

I wish I could have a peep at all of you or any of you!" she had said. Agnes had been pleased with the expression, and so was he. "All of us or any of us," he said to himself for the hundredth time as the train flew over the rain-sodden country. He thought, with a thrill at his heart, that her face would light up, as he had seen it do, and she would be glad to see him. She would put into his that small hand, that seemed to melt in his grasp like a flake of snow; and perhaps there would come upon her cheek that faint crimson, which only things very pleasant brought there—the reflection of a sweet excitement. What an era that would be for Roger! he dreamt it out moment by moment, till he almost felt that it had occurred. Sometimes a dream of the other kind would start across him—a horrible fancy that he would find her happy among others, making new friends, forgetting the old; but this was too painful to be encouraged. He thought the train as slow as an old hackney coach, when at last, after all these delays, he got away and found himself actually on the road to London and to her, and thought of a story he had heard of some one in hot haste, as he was, who had jumped out of his carriage and pushed it on behind to arrive the sooner. Roger felt disposed to do so, though his train was an express, and though he knew he could not go to the Square that evening to see her. But he was so much nearer her when he got to Notting Hill. She was on one side of the Park and he on the other. Next day he would walk across, through all the Sunday people, through the yellow fog, under the bare-branched trees, and knock at her door. There was still a moment of suspense, still a long wintry night—and then!

His aunt thought very well of the young man when he got to Notting Hill. She was his mother's sister, a widow and without children, and Roger had been named after her husband, the late Captain Brandon, whose portrait hung over her mantelpiece, and whose memory was her pride. She thought her nephew was like her side of the house, not "those Burchells," and felt a thrill of pride as he came in, tall and strong, in his red-brown hair and budding moustache, with a touch of autumn colour about him in the heavy despondency of the November day.

"What weather!" she said, "what weather, Roger! I daresay it is a little better in the country; but we have nothing else to expect in November, when the wind blows up the smoke out of the city."

Roger hastened to assure her that the country was a great deal worse, that the river was like a big, dismal ditch, full of mists and rains, and that town, with its cheerful lights and cheerful company, was the only place. Aunt Mary let herself be persuaded. She gave him a nice little dish of cutlets with his tea. She asked him questions about his mother and sister, and whether his papa's opinions were not getting modified by experience and by the course of events.

"Hasn't he learned to take warning by all this Romanising?" she asked, and shook her head at Roger's doubtful reply. She differed so much in ecclesiastical opinion from her brother-in-law, that she very

seldom went to the Rectory. But she was glad to hear all about her godchild, little Mary, and how Philip was getting on at Cambridge. And how pleasant it was to have some one to talk to, instead of sitting all alone and melancholy, thinking, or reading the newspaper. She made much of Roger, and told him he would always be welcome; he was to come as often as he pleased.

"I shall see her to-morrow," Roger said to himself, as he laid his head upon his pillow. The thought did not stop him from sleeping; why should it? but it suggested a string of dreams, some of which were terribly tantalizing. He was just putting out his hand to take hers, just about to hear the answer to some momentous question, when he would wake suddenly and lose it all; but still even the disappointment only awakened him to the fact that he was to see her to-morrow; he was to see her to-morrow! nay, to-day, though this yellow glimmer did not look much like daylight. He got up the moment he was called, and dressed with much pains and care—too much care. When his toilette was careless Roger looked, as he was, a gentleman; but when he took extra pains, a Sunday look crept about him, a certain stiffness, as of a man occupying clothes to which he was unaccustomed. His frock-coat—it was his first—was uglier and squarer than even frock-coats generally are, his hat looked higher, his gloves a terrible bondage. Poor boy! but for Cara he never would have had that frock-coat; thus to look our best we look our worst, and evil becomes our good. But his aunt was much pleased with his appearance when he went to church with her, and thought his dress just what every gentleman ought to wear on Sunday.

"But your gloves are too tight, my dear," she said.

Roger thought everything was tight, and was in twenty minds to abandon his fine clothes and put on the rough morning suit he had come in; but the frock-coat carried the day. He could not eat at Mrs. Brandon's early dinner. She was quite unhappy about him, and begged him not to stand on ceremony, but to tell her frankly if it was not to his mind. "For if you are going to spend your Sundays with me it is just as easy to buy one thing as another," Aunt Mary said, good, kind, deceived woman. She was very glad he should take a walk afterwards, hoping it would do him good.

"And I think perhaps I had better call at the Square and see Miss Beresford. Her aunt is sure to ask me when I see her," he said.

"Do, my dear," said the unsuspecting woman. And he set off across the park. It was damp enough and foggy enough to quench any man's courage. The Sunday people, who were out in spite of all disadvantages, were blue, half with the cold and half with the colour of the pitiless day. A few old ladies in close broughams took their constitutional drive slowly round and round. What pleasure could they find in it? still, as it is the ordinance of heaven that there should be old ladies as well as young men of twenty, it was a good thing they had comfortable broughams to drive about in; and they had been young in their time,

Roger supposed, feeling it hard upon everybody not to have the expectations, the hopes, that made his own heart beat. How it beat and thumped against his breast! He was almost sorry, though he was glad, when the walk was over and the tall roofs of the houses in the Square overshadowed him. His heart jumped higher still, though he thought it had been incapable of more, when he got to the house. "Doors where my heart was used to beat." He did not know any poetry to speak of, and these words did not come to him. He felt that she must be glad to see him, this dull damp Sunday afternoon, the very time when heaven and earth stood still, when there was nothing to amuse or occupy the languid mind. No doubt she and her father would be sitting together suppressing two mutual yawns, reading two dull books; or, oh, blessed chance! perhaps her father would have retired to his library, and Cara would be alone. He pictured this to himself—a silent room, a Sunday solitude, a little drooping figure by the chimney-corner, brightening up at sight of a well-known face—when the drawing-room door opened before him, and his dream exploded like a bubble, and with a shock of self-derision and disappointment more bitter than honest Roger had ever felt in all his simple life before. There were several people in the room, but naturally Roger's glance sought out the only one he was interested in, the only one he knew in the little company. She was standing in front of one of the windows, the pale wintry light behind making a silhouette of her pretty figure, and the fine lines of her profile; but curiously enough, it was not she, after the first glance, who attracted Roger's gaze, but the other figure which stood beside her, close to her, young, and friendly, in all the confidence of intimacy. It was Oswald Meredith who was holding a book in which he was showing Cara something—she, holding the corner of it with one hand, drew it down to her level, and with a raised finger of the other seemed to check what he was saying. They made the prettiest group; another young man, sitting at the table, gazing at the pair, thought so too, with an envious sentiment not so strong or so bitter as Roger's, but enough to swear by. Oswald had all the luck, this young fellow was saying to himself: little Cara, too! Behind was Mrs. Meredith, sitting by the fire, and Mr. Beresford, gloomy and sombre, standing by her. It was the first time he had been in this room, and the visit had been made expressly for the purpose of dragging him into it. He stood near his friend, looking down, sometimes looking at her, but otherwise never raising his eyes. This, however, was a side scene altogether uninteresting to Roger. What was it to him what these two elder people might be feeling or thinking? All that he could see was Cara and "that fellow," who presumed to be there, standing by her side, occupying her attention. And how interested she looked! more than in all the years they had known each other she had ever looked for him.

Cara started at the sound of his name. "Mr. Burchell? oh, something must be wrong at home!" she cried; then, turning round suddenly, stopped with a nervous laugh of relief. "Oh, it is only Roger! what a

fright you gave me! I thought it must be your father, and that Aunt Charity was ill. Papa, this is Roger Burchell, from the Rectory. You remember, he said he would come and see me. But, Roger, I thought you were coming directly, and it is quite a long time now since I left home."

"I could not come sooner," he said, comforted by this. "I came as soon as ever I could. My aunt was ill and could not have me; and then there was some trouble at the College," he added hurriedly, feeling himself to be getting too explanatory. Cara had given him her hand; she had pointed to a chair near where she was standing; she had given up the book which Oswald now held, and over which he was looking, half-amused, at the new-comer. Roger was as much occupied by him, with hot instinct of rivalry, as he was with Cara herself, who was the goddess of his thoughts; and how the plain young engineer, in his stiff frock-coat, despised the handsome young man about town, so easy and so much at home! with a virulence of contempt which no one could have thought to be in Roger. "Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?" he was tempted to say, making up to him straight before the other had time to open his lips. But of course, being in civilised society, Roger did not dare to obey his impulse, though it stirred him to the heart.

"You don't introduce us to your friend, Cara," said Oswald, smiling, in an undertone.

The fellow called her Cara! Was it all settled, then, and beyond hope, in four short weeks? Oh, what a fool Roger had been to allow himself to be kept away!

"Mr. Roger Burchell—Mr. Meredith—Mr. Edward Meredith," said Cara, with a slight evanescent blush. "Roger is almost as old a friend at the Hill as you are at the Square. We have all been children together;" and then there was a pause which poor little Cara, not used to keeping such hostile elements in harmony, did not know how to manage. She asked timidly if he had been at the Hill—if he had seen——?

"I came direct from the College last night," he said; and poor Roger could not keep a little flavour of bitterness out of his tone, as who should say, "A pretty fool I was to come at all!"

"The—College?" said Oswald, in his half-laughing tone.

"I mean only the Scientific College, not anything to do with a University," said Roger, defiant in spite of himself. "I am an engineer—a working man"—and though he said this as a piece of bravado, poor fellow! it is inconceivable how Sundayish, how *endimanché*, how much like a real working man in unused best raiment, he felt in his frock-coat.

"Oh, tell me about that!" said Mrs. Meredith, coming forward; "it is just what I want to know. Mr. Roger Burchell, did you say, Cara? I think I used to know your mother. I have seen her with Miss Cherry Beresford! Yes; I thought it must be the same. Do you know I have a particular reason for wishing to hear about your College?"

One of my friends wants to send his son there if he can get in. Will you tell me about it? I know you want to talk to Cara——”

“Oh, no; not if she is engaged,” said Roger, and blushed hot with excessive youthful shame when he had made this foolish speech.

“She will not be engaged long, for we are going presently,” said the smiling gracious woman, who began to exercise her usual charm upon the angry lad in spite of himself. She drew a chair near to the spot where he still stood defiant. “I shall not keep you long,” she said; and what could Roger do but sit down, though so much against his will, and allow himself to be questioned?

“Your friend from the country is impatient of your other friends,” said Oswald, closing the book which he held out to Cara, and marking the place as he gave it to her. “Do you want to get rid of us as much as he does?”

“He does not want to get rid of any one, but he does not understand—society,” said Cara, in the same undertone. Roger could not hear what it was, but he felt sure they were talking of him, though he did his best to listen to Mrs. Meredith’s questions. Then the other one rose, who was not so handsome as Oswald, and went to her other side, completely shutting her out from the eyes of the poor fellow who had come so far, and taken so much trouble to see her. The College,—what did he care for the College! about which the soft-voiced stranger was questioning him. He made her vague broken answers, and turned round undisguisedly, poor fellow! to where Cara stood; yet all he could see of her was the skirt of her blue dress from the other side of Edward Meredith, whose head, leaning forward, came between Roger and the girl on whom his heart was set.

“Mr. Burchell, Cara and her father are dining with my boys and me. Edward is only with me for a few hours; he is going away by the last train. Will not you come, too, and join us? Then Cara can see a little more of you. Do you stay in town to-night?”

Two impulses struggled in Roger’s mind—to refuse disdainfully, or to accept gratefully. In the first case he would have said he had dined already, making a little brag of his aunt’s early hours—in the second—a calculation passed very quickly through his mind, so quick that it was concluded almost before Mrs. Meredith’s invitation.

“I could,” he said, faltering; “or, perhaps, if your son is going I might go, too, which would be best——”

“Very well, then, it is a bargain,” she said, putting out her hand with a delightful smile. He felt how warm and sweet it was, even though he was trying at the moment to see Cara. This was the kind of mother these fellows had, and Cara living next door! Surely all the luck seems to be centred on some people; others have no chance against them. He stood by while Mrs. Meredith got up, drawing her sons with her. “Come, boys, you can carry on your talk later,” she said. “Good-by for the moment, Cara mia.” Then she turned to Mr. Beresford

who stood gloomily, with his eyes bent on the fire. "You are not sorry you have broken the spell?" she said, with a voice which she kept for him alone, or so at least he thought.

He gave his shoulders a hasty shrug. "We can talk of that later. I am going to see you to the door," he said, giving her his arm. The boys lingered. Oswald was patting his book affectionately with one hand. It was Edward who was "making the running" now.

"You are still coming to dine, Cara?" he said. "Don't turn me off for this friend. He cannot be such an old friend as I am; and I have only a few hours —"

"So has he," said Cara; "and he told me he was coming. What am I to do?"

"There are three courses that you can pursue," said Oswald. "Leave him, as Ned recommends; stay with him, as I certainly don't recommend; or bring him with you. And which of these, Cara, you may choose will be a lesson as to your opinion of us. But you can't stay with him; that would be a slight to my mother, and your father would not allow it. The compromise would be to bring him."

"Oh, how can I do that, unless Mrs. Meredith told me to do it? No; perhaps he will go away of himself—perhaps——"

"Poor wretch! he looks unhappy enough," said Edward, with the sympathy of fellow-feeling. Oswald laughed. The misery and offence in the new-comer's face was only amusing to him.

"Cara," he said, "if you are going to begin offensive warfare, and to flaunt young men from the country in our faces, I for one will rebel. It is not fair to us; we were not prepared for anything of the sort."

"My mother is calling us," said Edward, impatiently. Two or three times before his brother had irritated him to-day. Either he was in a very irritable mood, or Oswald was more provoking than usual. "I have only a few hours," he continued, aggrieved, in a low tone, "and I have scarcely spoken to you, Cara; and it was you and I who used to be the closest friends. Don't you remember? Oswald can see you when he pleases; I have only one day. You won't disappoint us, will you? I wish you'd go"—this was to his brother—"I'll follow. There are some things I want to speak to Cara about, and you have taken her up all the afternoon with your poetry. Yes, yes; I see, there is *him* behind; but, Cara, look here, you won't be persuaded to stay away to-night!"

"Not if I can help it," said the girl, who was too much embarrassed by this first social difficulty to feel the flattery involved. She turned to Roger, when the others went downstairs, with a somewhat disturbed and tremulous smile.

"They are our next-door neighbours, and they are very kind," she said. "Mrs. Meredith is so good to me; as kind as if she were a relation" (this was all Cara knew of relationships). "I don't know what I should do without her; and I have known the boys all my life. Roger,

won't you sit down? I am so sorry to have been taken up like this the very moment you came."

"But if they live next door, and you know them so well, I daresay you are very often taken up like this," said Roger, "and that will be hard upon your country friends. And I think," he added, taking courage as he found that the door remained closed, and that not even her father (estimable man!) came back, "that we have a better claim than they have; for you were only a child when you came to the Hill, and you have grown up there."

"I like all my old friends," said Cara, evasively. "Some are—I mean they differ—one likes them for different things."

The poor boy leaped to the worse interpretation of this, which, indeed, was not very far from the true one. "Some are poorer and not so fine as others," he said; "but perhaps, Cara, the rough ones, the homely ones, those you despise, are the most true."

"I don't despise any one," she said, turning away, and taking up Oswald Meredith's book.

By Jove! even when he was gone was "that fellow" to have the best of it with his confounded book? Roger's heart swelled; and then he felt that expediency was very much to be thought of, and that when a man could not have all he wanted it was wise to put up with what he could get.

"Cara, don't be angry with me," he said. "I shall like your friends, too, if—if you wish me. The lady is very nice and kind, as you say. She has asked me to go there to dinner, too."

"You!" Cara said, with (he thought) a gleam of annoyance. Roger jumped up, wild with rage and jealousy, but then he sat down again, which was certainly the best thing for him to do.

Sir Richard Steele.

AMONG the Queen Anne writers there is no figure which we seem to see more vividly than that of Sir Richard Steele. The man was by no means a hero. He wanted strength of will and the invincible determination that struggles successfully with evil. He was always sinning, always repenting; and there was no doubt a want of backbone in a nature that could thus lightly yield to temptation. There are many persons whose characters are so firmly knit that the compassion they may feel for a man like Steele is closely allied to contempt; there are others, more generous and perhaps more wise, whose sorrow for the failings of such a life is largely blended with sympathy. They will feel that, if there be much to regret in the story of Steele's career, there is much also which gives us a higher opinion of humanity and claims the noblest kind of charity. Steele frequently acted like a fool and suffered bitterly for his folly; but we forget and forgive the moral weakness of the man in our admiration of his virtues and genius.

The period at which he lived and the men of letters with whom he associated have an interest for us which has increased rather than diminished with the lapse of time. Half a century ago these writers were in less repute than they are now; fifty years hence it may be pretty safely asserted their reputation will not have waned. "A time comes," it has been well said, "to most readers when in the literature of the eighteenth century the mind finds its best repose;" and it is surely well to turn aside occasionally from the absorbing interest and often irritating suggestiveness of modern literature to a period that can be surveyed with the complacency and calmness with which we look upon the portrait of a venerable ancestor. Defects there may be in the picture, but they are viewed without annoyance; and we feel no inclination to quarrel with the critic who may point out a mole upon the cheek or a cast in the eye.

The Queen Anne essayists and poets, with one or two doubtful exceptions, do not impress us with a sense of greatness. They are pigmies by the side of the Elizabethan heroes; they are inferior in the highest literary qualities to many illustrious men who have lived and died in our own century. The names of Tickell, Prior, Gay, Thomson, and Steele may readily be matched by some second-rate modern authors; and even the noble trio Addison, Swift, and Pope, each of whom in his own department we are accustomed to regard as unrivalled, cannot be justly compared, for breadth of intellect and splendour of imagination,

with the poets and men of letters who stand in the front rank of our literature.

A great man, however, is not necessarily the most pleasant of companions. Milton is a sublime poet, but we are not quite sure that a week spent in his company would have been remembered with unalloyed pleasure. Coleridge, it is just possible, might have wearied us with his unceasing talk; and Wordsworth, though a good man and a noble poet, did not, we must believe, always act the part of a host with entire satisfaction to his guests. It is not given to every distinguished man to make himself, like Sir Walter Scott, as much beloved as he is admired; and it is not every writer, however admirable and accomplished, who can make his readers his friends, and bring them, as it were, into cousinly relationship with himself. This is what Addison and Steele have done, and this is why we feel so much at home in their company. Goodness, Milton tells us, is awful; but Addison's goodness has in it a grace and sweetness, a gentleness and almost womanliness of tone which forbid the sense of awe.

Steele, who, to quote Johnson's felicitous phrase, was "the most agreeable rake that ever trod the rounds of indulgence," was far from being the model of a Christian hero; but he was one of the most humane of men, most lovable, most tender-hearted. If he hurt himself by his follies, he did his best to help others by his wisdom; and that wisdom of a genial kind blends with the humour of his essays no one will doubt who has learnt to enjoy them thoroughly.

Sir Richard Steele—or let us style him Dick Steele, for a title sits awkwardly upon this affectionate and loosely-built man—calls up a host of memories in readers conversant with his age. A literary artist who would represent him properly requires a large canvas. He is himself a striking personage; and it is scarcely possible to picture him alone, so closely is he associated with the wits of the time. His figure is seen in every variety of position as we examine the literary and dramatic history of the period. Nor are his familiar features wanting in the political world. His talents were of the most varied description, and his intellectual energy was to be matched only by the amazing persistence and courage of his contemporary De Foe.

The late Mr. Forster, borrowing the phrase apparently from Leigh Hunt, has termed Steele "the sprightly father of the English Essay." This, beyond question, is his highest literary honour. He created a new kind of literature, and proved himself a master of the happy style which he invented. He did far more than this. It is scarcely too much to say that we owe Addison to Steele. If Steele had not hit upon this mine, Addison might never have displayed his exquisite skill in converting the rough ore into delicate and lovely specimens of workmanship. Without *The Tatler* and *Spectator* Addison would be to us in the present day little better than a name. We could not read his English poetry; we could not tolerate his *Cato*, or applaud his *Rosamond*; and, although competent scholars might still admire his Latin verses, he would have

secured no permanent place in literature. Had Steele possessed a less generous nature he must have felt jealous of his powerful auxiliary; but he was too true a friend, and had a disposition too healthy, to be the victim of so mean a passion. It is only in recent days that the attempt has been made to praise one of the friends at the expense of the other. In his well-known and admirably-written essay on Addison, Lord Macaulay did his utmost, many years ago, to detract from the merit of Steele; and considering that everybody in that day read Macaulay's Essays, and that few comparatively read the essays of Steele, the latter came to be spoken of by those who knew nothing about him in a half-indulgent, half-contemptuous manner. Steele was regarded as a poor sort of fellow, whose chief honour in life was the friendship of Addison. That great moralist, it was said, might justly have renounced such a scapegrace, but he was too generous to cast off his old schoolfellow "when he dived himself into a sponging-house or drank himself into a fever." It was inevitable, according to these critics, that so good and wise a man as Addison should feel a contempt for Steele; and it is to his honour that he clung to him notwithstanding, and tried, though with little success, to keep him out of scrapes, for the sake of their early friendship at the Charterhouse. An exquisite humourist and great novelist of our day has also, we regret to say, taken the view of Steele which is allied to pity. In Mr. Thackeray's pages Steele is no doubt represented with the utmost good humour and with much appreciation; but he is alluded to as "poor Steele," or "poor Dick Steele," is patted kindly on the back, and has his frailties exposed so as to awaken the feeling of compassion.

Now we do not think that this is quite the way in which this remarkable man should be regarded. We doubt greatly whether he needed pity in his lifetime, for he was blessed with a hopeful courageous nature, which no disappointment could for long depress and no difficulty daunt; and we doubt still more, considering his achievements and how much Englishmen owe to him, whether we should write of Sir Richard now as of one to be remembered with commiseration. In some respects, indeed, Addison deserves far more of our pity. He lacked the confidence in himself felt by his friend; he was painfully shy—Lord Chesterfield calls him the most timid man he ever saw—he suffered the torture shy men feel in general society; and he had the misfortune to marry a countess. Steele had many failings, and his life witnessed many failures; but he was free from morbid tendencies, and, we venture to think, enjoyed existence more heartily than Addison.

Steele began life unfortunately, for his father died before he was five years old. "I remember," he writes, "I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a beating the coffin and calling papa; for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces, and

told me, in a flood of tears, 'Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more; for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again.' She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit; and there was a dignity in her grief, amidst all the wildness of her transport, which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since." We know little of the boy's early days beyond the important fact that while yet very young he was placed at the Charterhouse, and that there began that warm friendship with Addison which, in spite of a temporary interruption, was cherished by Steele and remembered fondly unto his life's end. From that famous school, to which so many illustrious men have been indebted for their earliest training, Steele went up in 1692 to Merton College, Oxford. What means of support he had we do not know, nor do we hear much of his success at the University. While there he showed the bent of his mind by writing a comedy, and the modesty of his nature by burning it in accordance with the judgment of a friend. Anon, the impulsive youth resolved to be a soldier, and neither the entreaties of his friends, nor the anger of a rich relative who threatened to cut him off with a shilling, could prevent him from enlisting as a private in the Horse Guards. After a time, through the interest of Lord Cutts, he escaped from this ignoble position, "got a company in Lord Lucas's fusiliers, and became Captain Steele."

And now for the first time he appeared before the world as an author. His earliest work was the result of a conflict in his mind similar to that which has been so vividly pictured by John Bunyan. The flesh and the spirit were at war within him, and the flesh got the upper hand. In his desire for amendment, he wrote for his private use *The Christian Hero*, a little treatise not without some literary merit, which Schlosser, the historian of the eighteenth century, writes of at a guess, and condemns without having seen, for he calls the work a poem. The result of the publication was not altogether salutary. Captain Steele could not follow his own precepts, and the contrast between the printed page and the living hero called forth the mirth of his companions. On the other hand, it taught Steele that his true weapon was the pen rather than the sword, for the public liked the book, and within a few years several editions of the work were called for. About the close of the seventeenth century, Collier produced his celebrated attack on the immorality of the stage. The publication was well timed, and the arguments urged by the Jacobite clergyman were based upon facts too well known to be denied. Steele, whatever might be the vices of his life, never transgressed propriety, or failed to uphold whatever is lovely and of good report, when he pursued his calling as a man of letters. There are, no doubt, passages in his plays and essays that cannot with propriety be read aloud in the family; but this is due to the change of manners which forbids our using plain language for plain subjects.

Steele is occasionally coarse, and may repel readers who can tolerate, perhaps enjoy, the more alluring pictures of vice painted for them in verse and prose by some living writers; but Steele is never immoral, and his first comedy, *The Funeral; or, Grief à-la-Mode*, has the merit of affording a striking contrast to the licentious dramas of the Restoration. We shall have something to say further on about Steele as a playwright. It will suffice now to mention the publication of this comedy as an incident in his life. Its success was considerable, and the writer amazes us by the statement that it attracted the attention of King William III., a monarch whose fine qualities did not include a knowledge of literature or an interest in men of letters. Steele's next play, *The Tender Husband*, was dedicated to Addison, who wrote the prologue, which has little to commend it. Here, as elsewhere, the affectionate nature of the author is displayed. He observes that his purpose in the dedication is only to show the esteem he has for his friend, and how he looks upon the intimacy existing between them as one of the most valuable enjoyments of his life. Steele, by the way, understood the art of making compliments better than any man of his age, and the secret of his success may be traced to his sincerity. He felt what others only feigned. One striking instance of this honesty, combined with exquisite art, is to be seen in the dedication of one of his books to Dr. Garth, the physician praised by Pope.

"As soon," he writes, "as I thought of making the *Lover* a present to one of my friends, I resolved, without further distracting my choice, to send it to the *Best Natured Man*. You are so universally known for this character, that an epistle so directed would find its way to you without your name; and I believe nobody but you yourself would deliver such a superscription to any other person."

The Lying Lover; or, Ladies' Friendship, was Steele's next play, and he tells us that it was "damned for its piety"—a curious fate for a comedy, and one which must have rejoiced the heart of that witty censor of the stage, Jeremy Collier. With this play, produced in 1704, Steele, vexed probably at his defeat, ceased for many years to write for the stage; and it was not until eighteen years later that he wrote his last and best comedy, *The Conscious Lovers*, which, if Parson Adams may be believed, is the only play fit for a Christian to see, and as good as a sermon. The interval of five years between the representation of *The Lying Lover* and the issue of the first number of *The Tatler*, on April 12, 1709, comprises an interesting period of Steele's life. In 1707 he obtained the post of Gazetteer, which he terms the lowest office of the State, and at the same time he was appointed Gentleman Usher in the household of Prince George of Denmark. Some time before, but we know not how long, he had married the sister of a planter in Barbadoes who brought him a small fortune; but the lady died a few months after the marriage, and Steele, to relieve his grief or having conquered his regret, married Miss—or, in the phraseology of the time, Mrs.—Mary Scurlough, a lady who is as closely associated with his history as

Stella is with that of Swift, or Mrs. Unwin with Cowper's. The troubled sea upon which they sailed their barque together for more than twelve years has been painted for us quite unwittingly by the hand of a master. In a series of letters and notelets addressed to his wife—intended, it should be remembered, solely for her eye—Steele has expressed himself with the freedom of a lover and a husband. Sometimes the language is that of impulsive affection and doting fondness; sometimes he administers reproof; often he confesses his own follies, and still oftener exhibits them involuntarily. That he admired his wife very greatly, and thought her the most beautiful woman he knew, is evident from these unpremeditated effusions. It is probable also that, when feeling ashamed of himself, he felt at the same time a little afraid of his wife; a woman, to judge from Steele's words, of high principle and good sense, who, it is likely, expressed at times in pretty strong language her annoyance at the extravagance and inconsiderateness of her husband. From some of Steele's expressions it is clear that Mrs. Steele was by no means a weak or compliant wife. She knew her power and exercised it; but the impression we derive from the letters is by no means unfavourable to the lady's character. The courtship was of very short duration, and Miss Scurlock, in writing to tell her mother that subject to her consent she has promised speedy marriage, adds: "I cannot recommend the person to you as having a great estate, title, &c., which are generally a parent's chief care; but he has a competency in worldly goods to make easy, with a mind so richly adorned as to exceed an equivalent to the greatest estate in the world in my opinion; in short, his person is what I like; his temper is what I am sure will make you as well as myself perfectly happy, if the respect of a lover, with the tender fondness of a dutiful son, can make you so; and for his understanding and morals I refer you to his *Christian Hero*, which I remember you seemed to approve." Molly Scurlock, it is evident from this letter, had already made up her mind to marry Steele, and wrote for her parent's consent as a matter of form. Inquiries about him she says are needless, for she has made them already; she is certain she will never meet with a prospect of happiness if this should vanish, and fate she believes has ordained him hers.

One at least of Steele's faults was revealed to Miss Scurlock before marriage. On the morning of August 30, 1707, Steele wrote her a pious letter in which he inculcates resignation to the will of God, and tells his "fair one" to look up to that Heaven which has made her so sweet a companion; in the evening of that day he wrote another note in a different but equally characteristic strain:—

DEAR, LOVELY MRS. SCURLOCK,

I have been in very good company, where your health, under the character of *the woman I loved best*, has been often drunk; so that I may say I am dead drunk for your sake, which is more than *I die for you*.

RICH. STEELE.

About a week after this strange love-letter, Steele and his Molly appear to have been privately married, but to have lived apart until Mrs. Scurlough arrived in London from Carmarthen and gave her consent to the union. According to a letter addressed to his mother-in-law Steele was at this time in the receipt of a considerable income, yet it is clear the marriage had not been long consummated before the "dearest being on earth" discovered that her husband was involved in pecuniary difficulties. There are early signs that she was uncomfortable and that he was eager in his own defence. Before they had been married a year bickerings took place between them. Words, he says, cannot express the tenderness he feels; but he hints that his dear Prue takes pleasure in tormenting him, and that the disturbance between them is his greatest affliction. Two or three quarrels more, he writes, will despatch him quite; and he begs her to understand that, while loving her better than the light in his eyes or the life-blood in his heart, he cannot allow her to direct him in the management of his affairs. She writes to him with heat, we read again; but he will not answer her in that style, and what some might regard as a want of love he is resolved to treat as the uneasiness of a doting fondness. While uttering his affection he asks his Prue to write fondly to him in return, and in a few days acknowledges a "pretty letter" which was a perfect pleasure to him. That the woman had a generous nature is shown from her proposal to adopt Steele's natural daughter, to whom she was introduced not long after the marriage; and if she was often vexed and angered by her husband's recklessness about money matters, the fault might be due to his folly and not to her disposition. Mrs. Steele has been accused by Swift of governing her husband "abominably," and she has been accused by the biographers of loving money too well. Neither count is proved in the story, as we read it, of Steele's married life. Swift chose to be Steele's enemy, and his words about an enemy can never be trusted. The letters in which Steele pours out his heart, sometimes in anger, far oftener in devoted affection, afford no proof that the writer was governed by his wife. Mrs. Steele expected to be rich and found herself poor. Her husband received large sums of money; but he was constantly hampered with debt, and the household sometimes lacked the common necessities of life. Under such circumstances the lady probably complained, and possibly with some asperity; but Steele would never have heaped so many endearing epithets on a woman who was all the while ruling him abominably. "Thou art such a foolish, tender thing," he writes, "that there is no living with thee." "My dear little, peevish, beautiful, wise governess, God bless you!" is the affectionate superscription to another letter. She is the "beautifullest object that can present itself" to his eyes; she is his "poor, dear, angry, pleased, pretty, witty, silly, everything Prue;" when thinking of her the tender aching of his heart are not to be imagined, and, when he is "too fuddled" to attend to her orders, she is asked to remember him, notwithstanding, as her "most faithful, affectionate hus-

land." "Dear little woman, take care of thyself, and eat and drink cheerfully," are not the words of a henpecked man. Neither are the little reproofs he occasionally administers, as for instance: "I know no happiness in this life in any degree comparable to the pleasure I have in your person and society. I only beg of you to add to your other charms a fearfulness to see a man that loves you in pain and uneasiness, to make me as happy as it is possible to be in this life." Or again: "I would have you entirely at leisure to pass your time with me in diversions, in books, in entertainments, and no manner of business intrude upon us but at stated times. For though you are made to be the delight of my eyes and food of all my senses and faculties, yet a turn of care and housewifery, and I know not what prepossession against conversation-pleasures, robs me of the witty, the handsome woman to a degree not to be expressed. I will work my brains and fingers to procure us plenty of all things, and demand nothing of you but to take delight in agreeable dresses, cheerful discourses, and gay sights, attended by me."

Mrs. Steele received more than one request of this kind from her enamoured spouse; but she may be forgiven if the knowledge of his amazing extravagance and the struggle with household cares that was forced upon her from the first days of their marriage made such a request distasteful. For how could she care for the luxury of fine dresses and gay sights, with the recollection that the next day's post or messenger might contain the information that there was not "an inch of candle, a pound of coal, or a bit of meat in the house?" The happiest news Steele could send her was the promise of amendment and "always to have a quarter in advance;" and this he was well aware of, for after making such a promise he adds: "I know this is better talk to you than if it were a paper of wit written by your beloved Cowley." Unfortunately Mrs. Steele's experience soon told her that it was a promise very likely to be broken. Mr. Forster, whose masterly defence of Steele as a man of letters affords an excellent corrective to the depreciation of Macaulay, has, we think, mistaken to some extent the relationship existing between Steele and his wife. He considers that the notes he was in the habit of writing at all seasons and by all opportunities are a proof that Mrs. Steele exacted from him this confidence; and he even regards her careful preservation of his smallest note, not as a sign of affection, but as a token that she was "thrifty and prudent of everything that told against him." There are, perhaps, intimations in Steele's letters that may admit of this construction. A man writing to his wife, without the thought that his words will ever be seen by a third person, is not likely to be careful of his language; but the correspondence, as a whole, refutes, to our thinking, Mr. Forster's statement, and we shall always think it most reasonable to believe that Mrs. Steele's preservation of the "smallest note" was a proof of her affection, and not the malicious act of a censorious wife eager to preserve the records of her husband's shortcomings.

Before quitting these letters, which reveal to us more of Steele's

character than all other sources of information put together, we should like to draw the reader's attention to the passages in which the affectionate father writes about his children. They prove, if such proof were needed, the truth of Dr. Young's assertion, that Steele had the best nature in the world. "Miss Moll," he writes, "grows a mighty beauty, and she shall be very prettily dressed, as likewise shall Betty and Eugene; and if I throw away a little money in adorning my brats I hope you will forgive me." This was a fault readily to be pardoned. One cannot but wish, as no doubt his wife did, that this had been the only way in which Steele threw away his money. In another letter he says: "Moll is the noisiest little creature in the world, and as active as a boy. Madame Betty is the gravest of matrons in her airs and civilities; Eugene a most beautiful and lusty child."*

We read in one letter how Moll has stolen away his very heart; in another how one of the clerks of the Treasury had asked after his "wonderful girl" Betty, who had been cried up by a lady of his acquaintance "for a greater wit than her father—that is not much—but than her mother either;" how, again, Betty and Molly spent the Sunday evening with him, and proved very good company; how he treated them with strawberries and cream, and, according to his "fond way," ate more than both of them; how his five-year-old boy Eugene is "very merry in rags," but is to have new things immediately; how he grows a most delightful child, and "at the present writing is mightily well employed in tumbling on the floor of the room and sweeping the sand with a feather;" how he has resolved to make the three children his partners, and "will constantly lay up something out of all receipts of money for each of them in a box bearing the name of the little one to whom it belongs;" and how Bess sends her duty and promises to be her mother's comfort. "The brats, my girls," he adds, "stand on each side the table, and Molly says that what I am writing now is about her new coat. Bess is with me till she has new clothes. Miss Moll has taken upon her to hold the sand-box, and is so impertinent in her office that I cannot write more. But you are to take this letter as from your three best friends."

These are loving words, the outcome of a loving heart; and while reading them we think that there was no man of that age we should better like to have known than "dear, good, faulty Steele."

* Betty, it is interesting to remember, had Addison for one of her godfathers, and Wortley Montague for a second. She married a Judge, the Hon. John Trevor, afterwards Lord Trevor, and seems to have suffered, like her father, from impecuniosity. Like other beautiful young women, she suffered also, before making her final choice, from the importunities of lovers; and among the rivals "two fools," as she was accustomed to call them, fought a duel for her "at the Bath." She was the only one of Steele's four children who lived to a good age. Richard, the eldest, died in childhood. Mary fell into a consumption, and died unmarried, not long after the death of Steele. Eugene had died several years before; so that Sir Richard, like his most illustrious literary contemporaries, left no male descendant.

The published letters stretch over many years of Steele's life ; and we must now return to the period when the earliest of these letters was written, and note some of the more prominent facts in the career of the writer. The marriage, as we have said, took place in 1707 ; and it was not long before Mrs. Steele discovered that her husband, to use a very gentle expression, had miscalculated his income. On the strength of his representations the happy couple made at the outset a rather dashing appearance. Steele took a house in Bury Street, St. James's, and a country house at Hampton Court, where lived his friend Lord Halifax. They kept their coach and pair. Mrs. Steele had a saddle-horse ; and, the expenses of two establishments being more than Steele could manage, he escaped the difficulty by borrowing 1,000*l.* from his friend Addison. This sum he was able to return ; but there was no cessation to his self-made troubles, and many strange stories are told of his shifts and subterfuges to avoid the urgency of creditors. Two of these stories, which refer to a later period of Steele's life, will be familiar to most readers, for they are related by Dr. Johnson in his celebrated biography of Savage ; but they are too characteristic of Steele to be omitted even in this slight sketch of his career. Savage—so runs the first anecdote—accompanied Sir Richard in his chariot, very early one morning, to a mean tavern near Hyde Park Corner. A private room was secured, and Steele dictated a pamphlet to his amanuensis. The brother wits dined together, and after dinner the dictation continued, until the work was done.

Mr. Savage then imagined his task over, and expected that Sir Richard would call for the reckoning and return home ; but his expectations deceived him, for Sir Richard told him that he was without money, and that the pamphlet must be sold before the dinner could be paid for. And Savage was therefore obliged to go and offer their new production for sale for two guineas, which with some difficulty he obtained. Sir Richard then returned home, having retired that day only to avoid his creditors, and composed the pamphlet only to discharge his reckoning.

The second anecdote, told by Savage, also bears the semblance of truth. Steele invited to his house a great many persons of the first quality. They were surprised at seeing a considerable number of men in livery, and, in the freedom of after-dinner conversation, this surprise was expressed.

Sir Richard very frankly confessed they were fellows of whom he would very willingly be rid. And, being then asked why he did not discharge them, declared that they were bailiffs, who had introduced themselves with an execution, and whom, since he could not send them away, he had thought it convenient to embellish with liveries, that they might do him credit while they staid.*

* Steele, adds Johnson, intended to marry Savage to his illegitimate daughter, with a dowry of 1,000*l.* ; but, "as he was never able to raise the sum which he had offered, the marriage was delayed." Steele, one can readily believe, had a fellow-feeling for the hopelessly perverse man whose facility in getting rid of the little

Dr. Thomas Rundle (the "Rundle has a heart" of Pope), in drawing the character of Steele before his death, observed that "so many follies and so much worth were never blended together in any single person before," and that his carelessness in the management of money often compelled him to basenesses for which he hated himself. He adds :—

But still the want of money returned, and with it all the mean shifts to extricate himself from the fatigue of lying to his creditors. . . . He seemed to want gold only to give it away ; his busy mind pursued project after project, in hopes to be rich, that by it he might be more eminently serviceable to his friends and his country. He embraced every appearance that flattered this public-spirited avarice, though the proposal was ever so wanton and improbable. In hopes of getting immense wealth, he ran after every whim, and so first aimed at the Philosopher's Stone ; and when that would not do, he could condescend to be thought the author of the humble discovery of a new-fashioned hoop-petticoat ; but still 'twas with the sacred view of serving his country by his riches. . . . He was often within a day of being the richest and therefore the honestest man in England.

Addison held the same opinion of his friend as that entertained by Rundle. Steele, upon one occasion, gave a banquet to more than 200 persons, which was concluded with an epilogue written by Addison. The few first lines are characteristic, and all the more so since they could not have been spoken without Steele's approval :—

The sage, whose guests you are to-night, is known
To watch the public weal, though not his own ;
Still have his thoughts uncommon schemes pursued,
And deem'd with projects for his country's good.
Early in youth his enemies have shown
How narrowly he miss'd the Chemic Stone.
Not Friar Bacon promised England more.

Of Steele's unthriftiness, in which he resembles his famous countrymen Oliver Goldsmith and Richard B. Sheridan, enough has been said. Of his versatility as a projector, several instances will be given in the course of our narrative ; of his hopes and fears as a politician, much also might be written. Every morning he awoke full of new projects ; every evening, in spite of numberless failures, he went to bed with the conviction that the morrow would bring a realisation of his wishes, and this hope kept him cheerful under circumstances which would have sapped the energy of ordinary men.

Two years after his marriage, on April 12, 1709, and without the knowledge of Addison, Steele published the first number of *The Tatler*. The significance of this event could have been foreseen by no one. Steele did not know, and none of his readers knew, that from this small seed

money he acquired must have excited sympathy. But Savage, unlike his patron, was a squanderer of friendship as well as of money. He ridiculed Steele at the very time he was living on his bounty ; and Sir Richard, as Dr. Johnson allows, must be acquitted of severity in withdrawing the allowance he had paid him, and refusing him admittance to his house.

would spring many a goodly tree, bright with flowers and wealthy in fruit, and that foliage, blossoms, and fruit would be unlike aught that had been grown hitherto in the garden of our literature. The name of Isaac Bickerstaff had achieved notoriety from the famous joke played by Swift upon the astrologer and almanack maker Partridge, who, although done to death and decently buried by the great wit, would not believe in his own decease. Steele took advantage of the popularity created by Swift's invention, and announced his journal as *The Lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.* The paper was published three times a week, the days on which the post left London, and contained, besides amusing sketches of character, "accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment," and poetical criticisms, a portion devoted to foreign and domestic news. This variety of plan suited the habits of Steele, and afforded scope for his genius. His versatility and his mercurial nature made prolonged labour distasteful; but he had wit, and readiness, and lively fancy, a quickness of perception and a facility in composition, which eminently fitted him for the task he had selected. Addison detected Steele's hand in the sixth number, and afforded him some slight assistance from that time; but it was not until about eighty numbers had appeared that he became a frequent contributor. For some months almost all the writing, as well as the editing, of the work devolved upon Steele. It would seem that he was not a little careless about the revision of the proofs; but readers in those days were easily satisfied, and the niceties of composition were as much disregarded as a uniform system of spelling. Pope in verse, and Addison in prose, were the literary reformers of the age; and the latter, after a century and a half, retains his fame not only as a moralist and humourist, but as a consummate master of language. Steele wrote with strong feeling and healthy enthusiasm, with much pathos and a varied knowledge of life; but he often wrote incorrectly, and his sentences are sometimes so oddly put together as to obscure the meaning.* The depreciation he has received from some critics is due, we believe, in great measure, to the looseness of his style; but it may be observed, while acknowledging Steele's weakness in this respect, that frequently and almost always when moved by the pathos of his subject, the writer's language is simple, forcible, and appropriate. The best of Steele's papers in *The Tatler* are excelled by Addison alone, and there is a sprightliness and simplicity of tone about them which make them delightful reading. Steele came to his work well furnished, he carried it on with infinite vivacity, and in spite of the help rendered him by his illustrious friend, the colour of the work, if the term may be allowed, comes from the hand

* Here is a striking instance, extracted from *The Spinster*, of Steele's slovenliness in composition: "No one will make and provide at home what will hinder a family from doing what would purchase a great deal more than what would buy the same thing from abroad; and, on the contrary, no one will go abroad for what they can have for less cost and labour at home."

of Steele. As the teller of slight and pathetic tales he is superior to Addison, and in criticism he takes a place by Addison's side. "What a good critic he was!" exclaimed Landor. "I doubt if he has ever been surpassed." Steele was indeed born for literature far more than for politics, for which his chief qualifications were a directness and manliness of purpose, and a love of country as pure and chivalrous as the love he felt for women. For business and commercial speculations he had little genius, but his rashness forced him into many a foolish scheme at the cost of time and money that might have been spent more profitably.

The only post held by Steele when he started on his career of essayist was that of official Gazetteer. After a while he was made Commissioner of Stamps; but when the Tories came into office, Steele, whose Whiggery had become obnoxious, lost his previous appointment. On Jan. 2, 1711, Swift writes to Stella: "Steele's last *Tatler* came out to-day. You will see it before this comes to you, and how he takes leave of the world. He never told so much as Mr. Addison of it, who was as much surprised as I. . . . To my knowledge he had several good hints to go upon, but was so lazy and weary of the work he would not improve them." Steele was impulsive and given to change, but he was not lazy, and two months after the exit of *The Tatler* appeared the first number of *The Spectator*. Addison was consulted this time. The two friends formed the plan of the papers in concert, and, according to Bishop Hurd, the characters that comprise the celebrated club were the common work of both. This may be true; but it is certain that the second number, in which the different characters of the club are sketched, was written by Steele, and that we are indebted to his pen for our first introduction to the immortal Sir Roger de Coverley. Miss Aikin, with the curious habit of depreciating Steele in vogue amongst writers, regards it as "a singular circumstance" that the first hints of this character should have been thrown out by him; as if the versatile fancy and happy art of character-drawing that had so long sustained *The Tatler* were incapable of picturing the humorous knight! The portrait is a mere sketch, but the few lines that form it show the hand of a master. There was a time when every one who reads at all was perfectly familiar with *The Spectator*, and when an allusion to a paper would have sufficed without quotation. But time, though it cannot destroy our finest literature, is apt to rust it. Even Sir Roger himself is known by name only to many well-informed readers, and the short passage we shall quote may have the recommendation of novelty:—

It is said he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester and Sir George Etherege, fought a duel at his first coming to town, and kicked Bully Dawson in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself, and

never dressed afterwards. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humours, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. . . . He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour that he is rather beloved than esteemed; his tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied; all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company; when he comes into a house, he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way upstairs to a visit. I must not omit that Sir Roger is a justice of the quorum; that he fills the chair at a quarter session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause by explaining a passage in the Game Act.

The art with which Addison afterwards treats the knight is inimitable; but it should be always remembered that the first representation of Sir Roger is due to Steele, who seems throughout Addison's career to have paved the way for his successes. *The Spectator* was wonderfully popular. All the town became familiar with it; it was found on every breakfast table; fine ladies who knew nothing of literature followed the prevailing fashion, and learnt to talk about Will Honeycomb and Will Wimble, and to laugh at the eccentricities of Sir Roger. The circulation was enormous for an age in which books and papers were usually the food of a circle of wits, instead of being, as in our day, a common necessary of life. Both in numbers and in volumes the famous essays sold by thousands, and the surprise of Steele must have been as great as his pleasure. Nevertheless, after a while he grew restless and impatient, and at the close of 1712 brought his journal to an end. This was done, as in the former case, without consultation with Addison; and when two or three months later Steele commenced *The Guardian*, he did so without communicating with his friend. The reasons for this reticence are not obvious, but the fact is noteworthy as exhibiting Steele's confidence in his own judgment and resources. He was always glad to receive literary aid from Addison, but in no instance does he seem to have acted as if dependent upon it. Addison was at work upon his *Cato*, and contributed nothing to the first volume of *The Guardian*; but Steele's name and reputation were now established, and the first men of the day were glad to fight under his banner. Bishop Berkeley, one of the noblest and purest of characters in an age that was far from being noble or pure, wrote fourteen papers; Pope, whose *Essay on Criticism* had lately placed him in the front rank among the writers of his time, contributed eight essays, one of which on the pastorals of Philips acquired no small notoriety; Philips himself wrote a paper upon song-writing; Gay, Parnell, Rowe, Hughes, Budgell, and Tickell also contributed; and after a time Addison was able to return to his alliance, and to write above fifty numbers, while upwards of eighty came from the prolific pen of the editor. For a third time Steele had achieved a great literary success, and for a third time he suddenly put an end to his work before it had exhibited any symptoms of decay. It would seem that literature had for the moment lost its charms, and that Steele was eager

to enter upon the arena of politics, for no sooner had *The Guardian* vanished than he announced the publication of *The Englishman*.*

Steele was a staunch adherent to the principles of the Revolution, and, like his illustrious contemporary De Foe, professed an ardent admiration of King William. He had promised at the outset that *The Guardian* should be kept free from party—a difficult task in that age, and with such an editor; but a task, nevertheless, that had been accomplished in *The Spectator*. The restraint, however, proved too severe, and indignation at what Steele considered the treacherous conduct of Swift led him to denounce his former friend, and to attack the Tory principles of *The Examiner*. Steel, hot-headed and plain-spoken, writes in a passion, while Swift replies with singular calmness and moderation; but his apparent sincerity failed to remove the suspicions of Steele, and the breach between the two men became irreparable. By the Treaty of Utrecht it was stipulated that the harbour and works at Dunkirk should be destroyed. A strong effort was made to set aside this article of the treaty; and Steele, indignant at the attempt, wrote vigorously against the memorial that had been sent to the Queen, and observed "that the British nation expects the immediate demolition of Dunkirk." Upon this *The Examiner* laid against him a charge of disloyalty, calling the language of the writer abominable, and himself a villain. The amenities of party warfare were not understood in those days; and it was quite proper for a political adversary to term a man a rascal and a "contemptible wretch," whose views about the Treaty of Utrecht did not agree with his own. The times were out of joint; in Steele's judgment the great principles of the Revolution were at stake; and inspired, it is not to be doubted, by patriotic feelings, he rushed with characteristic ardour into the thick of the fray. In October, 1713, *The Englishman* was started; five months later Steele took his seat in Parliament as Member for Stockbridge, and delivered his maiden speech on the first night of the session. Before this he had printed a political pamphlet

* A full account of Steele's various periodicals, and of the serials produced by writers who followed the track he had thrown open for them, would occupy many pages; but it is worth noting how frequently Steele shifted his ground, and how ready he was to commence a new journal. Thus, for instance, *The Englishman* was stopped at the completion of the fifty-seventh number, and on the same day or the day previously *The Lover* was started. This paper, published three times weekly, lasted from February 25 to May 27; but a month before it was dropped Steele had issued *The Reader*, which expired at its ninth number. *The Theatre* lived for three months. *Town Talk* was dropped, like *The Reader*, at its ninth number; but before throwing this aside *The Tea Table* appeared, and this was followed immediately by *Chit Chat*, both of these papers having a most ephemeral existence. The titles selected by Steele for his journals were appropriated, with some modifications, by a number of contemporary essayists. *The Tory Tatler*, *The Northern Tatler*, *The Fairy Tatler*, *The Political Tatler*, *The Country Spectator*, *The Female Spectator*, are a few titles among many which serve to remind us of the popularity achieved by Steele's famous publications.

called *The Crisis*, on the Hanoverian succession and the perils of the time, which caused much excitement, and was termed by the Tories an inflammatory libel. The writer did not spare his words in this defence of Whig principles; and no sooner had Steele taken his seat in the House of Commons than he was accused of encouraging sedition, and called upon for his defence. Addison was near his friend on that memorable occasion, and on either side of him sat Robert Walpole and General Stanhope. His speech occupied three hours, and proved, in the judgment of temperate men, that Steele's integrity of purpose was not to be questioned, and that his powers of oratory were of no mean order. When Steele had left the House several Members spoke in his defence; among others, Lord Finch, the eldest son of the Earl of Nottingham. Some time before Lady Charlotte Finch (afterwards Duchess of Somerset) had been attacked in *The Examiner* for "knotting in Saint James's Chapel during divine service in the immediate presence both of God and her Majesty, who were affronted together." Steele, indignant at this public attack upon a lady, had replied with some asperity in *The Guardian*, and "rescued innocence from calumny."

Like Steele, Lord Finch was a new Member; and, when Steele was assailed for party purposes, the young nobleman sprang to his legs for the first time in defence of the man who had done his sister a kindness. His generous impulse seemed for the moment more generous than wise. The speaker hesitated, was overcome by timidity, and sat down exclaiming, "It is strange I cannot speak for this man, though I could readily fight for him." A cheer filled the House at these loyal words, and Lord Finch, with his courage revived, rose a second time, and is said to have made a capital speech. It was a gallant, but vain effort, for Steele lost his seat by a large majority. This expulsion of a Member for opinions expressed before election was perhaps the first instance, according to Hallam, "wherein the House of Commons so identified itself with the executive administration, independently of the sovereign's person, as to consider itself libelled by those who impugned its measures."

For a brief moment, then, Steele lost his seat; but the triumph of his opponents was short-lived. Steele was expelled the House in March; on August 1, Queen Anne died; the chiefs of the Tory party were imprisoned or forced into exile, and Steele was now assured that the moment of his good fortune had arrived. The benefits conferred on him, however, were not remarkable. He was made Surveyor of the Royal Stables, was placed in the Commission of the Peace for Middlesex, and, on presenting an address from the county, obtained the honour of Knighthood. These were small boons; but one post of some value fell to Steele which he was eminently qualified to fill. Nobody, as we learn from Colley Cibber, was better liked by the players; and, when the licence of Drury Lane Theatre had expired, they asked Steele to use his interest for its renewal, and to accept the supervision of the theatre with an income of 700*l.* a year. The managers were forced by Government to pay this salary to some-

body, and whom could they elect better than Sir Richard? "We knew," writes the good-humoured Cibber, "the obligations the stage had to his writings, there being scarcely a comedian of merit in our whole company whom his *Tatlers* had not made better by his public recommendation of them, and many days had our house been particularly filled by the influence and credit of his pen;" and he adds that Steele was so highly pleased with the offer made to him "that, had we been all his own sons, no unexpected act of filial duty could have more endeared us to him." How honourably Sir Richard behaved during the negotiations respecting the patent of the theatre is told at some length by Cibber, and redounds to the praise of both.

And now Steele entered the House once more as Member for Borough-bridge, in Yorkshire, and is said to have been successful as a speaker. If courage, honesty of purpose, and a vivacious intellect can make a Member successful in the most fastidious of all assemblies, he was not likely to fail. Two years later, on the suppression of the rebellion in 1717, he was sent to Scotland as a Commissioner for Forfeited Estates; and it is a fact worth noting that, in order to improve himself in the knowledge of the French language, he took a Frenchman with him as a companion. The expedition was to have been made in the saddle; and Steele, writing to his wife who was then in Wales, observes: "I have been much upon horseback to prepare me for my journey." In a later letter he informs her that he is on the point of starting "with an opportunity of a gentleman's coach going on," but there "were many resolutions and irresolutions concerning his way of going;" and there seems to have been a delay of many months before he actually set out. On the return journey it took Steele seven days to travel from Edinburgh to Pearce Bridge, in the county of Durham, but the mode of conveyance is not stated. It would take him, he adds, another week to reach York, and at the close of the third week he hoped to be in London.

The remaining events of Steele's life must be rapidly passed over. It was on his return from Scotland, where he appears to have been received with much consideration, that he invented a fish-pool for bringing live salmon to London from the coast of Ireland. He expected to gain a great fortune by this invention, wrote an elaborate treatise in its favour, and promised the public who might join with him in the venture to divide ten per cent. six times a year. It is scarcely necessary to add that the project proved abortive, and that Steele was laughed at for his credulity. At the close of the same year, Lady Steele died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey—"the best woman that ever man had" is her husband's honest testimony to her worth. A little later occurred the memorable quarrel between Steele and his kind friend Addison. The Earl of Sunderland had proposed a Bill for fixing permanently the number of the Peerage. Steele saw the evil of the measure, and not only opposed it in Parliament, but actually started a sixpenny paper, called *The Plebeian*, in order to denounce it. To this Addison replied in

two pamphlets, entitled *The Old Whig*. Personalities were exchanged, and thus—to use the words of Johnson, who terms the controversy *Bellum plus quam civile*—"these two illustrious friends, after so many years passed in confidence and endearment, in unity of interest, conformity of opinion, and fellowship of study," parted finally "in acrimonious opposition." There was no time for the reconciliation which one must believe would have taken place eventually; for before another winter came round Addison was dead, and Steele lamented him with unavailing sorrow. Other troubles followed the loss of his oldest friend. Sir Richard had a controversy with that weakest of statesmen, the Duke of Newcastle, then Lord Chamberlain; his theatrical patent was revoked, and the pecuniary loss, according to Steele's reckoning, amounted to 9,800*l*. John Dennis, the critic, with his wonted malignity, took advantage of Sir Richard's depression to libel and traduce him; and yet Steele, with his impulsive generosity, had actually at one time suffered arrest from having become security for this ill-conditioned man. "S'death! why did he not keep out of the way, as I did?" was the cool remark that fell from Dennis, when he heard the news. On Walpole's return to office, Steele was restored to his position as "Governor of the Royal Company of Comedians," and not long afterwards his last and best comedy, *The Conscious Lovers*, was brought upon the stage, and proved a decided hit. The public applauded, and the King presented the author with 500 guineas. Despite this appreciation, however, we must confess that we find this play and all Steele's dramas extremely dull reading. As an essayist, he was the most natural of writers; as a dramatist, he is the most artificial; his plots are absurd, and his characters possess no verisimilitude. There is not one of them for which it is possible to feel the remotest interest; not one that has acquired a living place in literature. It is a bore to read his dramas, and we are inclined to believe that the author was mistaken when he said that *The Lying Lover* was damned for its piety; it must have been for its dulness. A writer of Steele's genius was not likely, indeed, to produce any kind of literary work that should be wanting in ability; and the artful construction of his comedies pleased the playgoers of his age, who cared much more for art than nature. His purpose as a moralist is good throughout, and occasionally, as in *The Funeral*, we find a happy display of humour; but the principal impression left upon the mind after reading Steele's four plays is one of painful weariness.*

* Mr. Ward's opinion of Steele's dramatic art is more favourable; but he observes that his comic genius lacked sustained vigour, and that calling in sentiment to the aid of humour, and taking a hint from Colley Cibber, he "became the real founder of that *sentimental comedy* which exercised so pernicious an influence upon the progress of our dramatic literature." Mr. Ward adds: "It would be unjust to hold him responsible for the feebleness of successors who were altogether deficient in the comic power which he undoubtedly even as a dramatist exhibits; but, in so far as their aberrations were the result of his example, he must be held to have con-

The Conscious Lovers appeared on the stage in 1722. A year later, in failing health, and with "a very heavy heart," Steele went to Bath, and while there, as sorrows come in battalions, he received the news of his son's death. "Lord, grant me patience!" he exclaims, and there was now large need of it. The wine of life was on the lees; his work was done; and, after spending some time in Hereford, Steele retired to his wife's estate, at Carmarthen. He continued to suffer—as he had suffered all his life long—from pecuniary difficulties; and he had also a dispute with the managers of Drury Lane, which estranged him from his former friends. We hear, too, of a paralytic seizure; but the date of it is uncertain, nor do we know how these last sad years of retirement were passed. The end came in 1728; and we bid farewell to a man who, although far indeed from faultless, possessed a fine intellect, a tender heart, and a generous disposition, that keep his memory fragrant still. How much Steele accomplished for English literature will be best understood by those who are familiar with the age in which he lived; and the more we become acquainted with it, the higher will be our estimation of the man who, with the help of his friend Addison, reformed the morals and manners of society, and showed how possible it was to employ the wit and humour that had been so often prostituted to vice in the service of virtue and religion.

J. D.

tributed, though with the best of motives, to the decline of the English drama, and in particular of that branch of it to which his plays, after all, essentially belong."—See *English Dramatic Literature*, vol. ii. p. 603.

When the Sea was Young.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART II.

WHEN our earth's deep atmosphere bore the waters of her present seas floating aloft in the form of vast cloud-masses above her fiery surface, a remarkable peculiarity of appearance must occasionally, though perhaps only as a rare phenomenon, have been observable. Suppose that while a telescopist on Venus or Mercury was contemplating the earth, one of those rapid changes described in the preceding part affected cloud-layers forming the earth's visible outline at the moment of observation. The earth's apparent figure would then not only be distorted by the change, but the actual progress of the change would take place under the observer's eye. Most probably no change of the kind could have been detected by direct observation, many circumstances with which telescopists are familiar rendering an observation of the kind peculiarly difficult. But supposing the observer to have watched the earth when the moon was about to pass in transit across her face, and that the moon appeared at the moment close to that part of the earth's outline where such changes were taking place; then it would be possible, on account of this favourable conjuncture, to recognise the change of outline. For instance, if the apparent outline chanced to be raised above its usual position when the moon was very close, the two outlines—that of the moon and that of the earth—would seem to be in contact before they really were; but if, just at that time, the high cloud-layer which formed the raised part of the earth's outline were rapidly to disappear, then her outline would shrink in that place, and no longer appear to touch the moon's. Or again, it might happen that an observer of the moon, watching the great globe of the earth as it moved over the star-strewn heavens, would see its outline pass over and conceal some conspicuous star, but in a few minutes perceive the star reappearing outside the same part of the earth's outline. The observer would then know that the outline must have shrunk. In these and like ways observers outside the earth might in those remote times have seen the evidence of very active processes of change taking place in her deep cloud-laden atmosphere.

Now appearances such as these cannot be expected to occur frequently in the case of Jupiter or Saturn. The changes themselves which could alone produce them are infrequent, and the conditions under which the changes could alone be detected occur but seldom; so that the chance of a change occurring just where and when it could be detected are very

small indeed. Yet in one case certainly astronomers have detected just such a change in the outline of Jupiter. It would be difficult—nay, we venture very confidently to say that *it is impossible*—otherwise to explain what is described by the late Admiral Smyth, one of the most careful and skilful of modern astronomers: "On Thursday, June 26, 1828," he says, "the moon being nearly full and the evening extremely fine, I was watching the second satellite of Jupiter as it gradually approached to transit its [the planet's] disc. My instrument was an excellent refractor, of $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches aperture, and 5 feet focal length, with a power of 100. It appeared in contact at about half-past ten, by inference, and for some minutes remained on the edge of the limb" (that is, on the outline of the disc), "presenting an appearance not unlike that of the lunar mountains coming into view during the first quarter of the moon, until it finally disappeared on the body of the planet. At least twelve or thirteen minutes must have elapsed, when, accidentally turning to Jupiter again, to my astonishment I perceived the same satellite *outside the disc*. It was in the same position," as to level, "where it remained distinctly visible for at least four minutes, and then suddenly vanished."

This narrative is so surprising, even when explained in the simple manner which our theory of Jupiter's condition suggests, and still more so on the usual theory of Jupiter's condition, that it may be well to pause for a moment to inquire whether there may not have been some mistake. Admiral Smyth was a skilful observer, as we have already stated. His statement alone would have great weight. Still one may admit the bare possibility of an optical illusion, similar to what is described in Brewster's *Natural Magic*, the satellite seen after the immersion being a mere trick of the mind, a "blot on the brain which would show itself without." Smyth himself supposed so, for he says: "As I had observed the phenomena of Jupiter and his satellites for many years, without any remarkable irregularities, I could not but imagine that some optical or other error prevailed, especially as the satellite was on this" (*i. e.* the hither) "side of the planet." And probably the phenomenon thus dismissed by Smyth himself would not have been heard of, but for the fact that two other observers chanced to witness it. "A few days afterwards," proceeds Admiral Smyth, "I received a letter from Mr. Maclear, Biggleswade, informing me that he had also observed the same, but that he had considered it a 'Kitchener's wonder'" (old Kitchener, the telescopist, having been apt to recount every optical illusion by which he was perplexed as a real phenomenon). "And about the same time," adds Smyth, "Dr. Pearson, having favoured me with a visit, asked me whether I had noticed anything remarkable on the 26th; for that he had, in accidentally looking at Jupiter, *seen the second satellite reappear*! Here, then, were three observers, at distant stations, with telescopes of different apertures, all positive as to the extraordinary deviation from rule. It may be borne in view that Biggleswade is twelve miles from Bedford" (the place of Smyth's observatory; and South Kilworth, Dr. Pearson's residence, is thirty-five). Mr. Maclear's telescope was rather

smaller than Admiral Smyth's; while Dr. Pearson's was a much more powerful instrument, twelve feet long, and nearly seven inches in aperture. "Explanation," calmly remarks Mr. Webb, in speaking of this phenomenon, "is here set at defiance; demonstrably neither in the atmosphere of the earth nor Jupiter; where and what could have been the cause? At present we can get no answer." But it is not the part of the true student of science thus to resign the attempt to explain a phenomenon merely because it is unusually perplexing. In this case we can reason directly from the observed fact to its interpretation, apart from those *à priori* considerations which in the present essay have led us to regard such a phenomenon as one to be looked for in Jupiter's case. First, the observation was certainly not an optical illusion, for three persons made it independently; secondly, it was demonstrably not due to terrestrial atmospheric causes, for it was seen from three stations far apart; thirdly, it was demonstrably not caused by any action of Jupiter's atmosphere on light proceeding from the satellite, for the satellite was between Jupiter and the observer; fourthly, the satellite cannot really have stopped, gone back on its path, and then resumed its onward course, unless the laws of nature were suspended—a theory we may dismiss in a scientific inquiry; for a similar reason, fifthly, we may dismiss the idea that the whole mass of Jupiter moved in abnormal fashion. There remains only one possible interpretation—viz. that the outline of Jupiter's disc had changed in position; in fact, in whatever way we explain *how* this happened, the observations may be regarded as proving unmistakably that it *did* happen.

Now the supposition that Jupiter's outline altered leaves us still much to wonder at. For let us consider the extent of change necessary to account for what was observed. Smyth may have been mistaken as to the time intervals he mentions in his account, since he does not seem to have taken them from the clock. The interval, which he supposed to have lasted twelve or thirteen minutes, may in reality not have lasted more than five or six; and the time during which, after reappearing, the satellite continued visible, may not have lasted more than two minutes instead of four, as roughly estimated. But, taking only eight minutes as the total interval between the first and second disappearance, we have to account for marvellous changes in the apparent position of the planet's outline. For in eight minutes the second satellite would travel about 4,000 miles, and the outline of Jupiter must have changed by that amount, seeing that at the first disappearance the visual line to the satellite just touched the planet's apparent edge, while at the second disappearance the visual line to the second position of the satellite, 4,000 miles from the first, touched the planet's edge in its now changed position. Probably the difference was even greater; Smyth's own estimate of the time would make it at least 8,000 miles; but 4,000 miles will be enough to deal with. It is not necessary to suppose that the planet's apparent outline, *as ordinarily seen*, shrank inwards by the whole of this amount. More probably the outline bulged beyond its normal position at the

time of the first disappearance, and presently shrank below its normal position, bringing the satellite again into view, and remaining thus depressed until the second disappearance had taken place. We may suppose, then, that at the beginning the surface forming the apparent outline was (at the place where the satellite's transit began) about 2,000 miles above the usual mean level, while afterwards it was much below that level. Two thousand miles being less than the fortieth part of the diameter of Jupiter, we can readily understand why even so enormous an apparent expansion or contraction should not have noticeably affected the symmetry of the planet's apparent figure. Indeed, with ordinary telescopic power the outline of Jupiter is so expanded by irradiation, that much greater changes of level would be so far masked as to escape attention. But we are not greatly concerned to reason at this stage as though the theory that the planet's outline changed required to be defended against objections. For it is absolutely certain that the outline must have changed. The visual line to the satellite certainly passed several thousand miles nearer the planet's centre at the time of the first disappearance than at that of the second, yet in both cases touched the apparent outline, which must therefore have shifted by as many thousands of miles, unless the satellite itself had stopped and retreated, or the whole bulk of the planet had shifted; neither of which events could occur except by a miracle. Now the changing of the outline, though marvellous, is not miraculous, and, being demonstrably the only non-miraculous interpretation of the observed event, must be accepted as the true interpretation—the event itself, observed as it was by three skilled astronomers, having certainly occurred.

This being so, the outline of Jupiter having certainly changed for awhile on that particular occasion, which theory, we would ask, should be rejected as fanciful and sensational—the ordinary theory, according to which the solid crust of Jupiter must, after rising 2,000 miles at least, have sunk through 4,000 miles? or the theory that a cloud-layer, floating at least 2,000 miles above the usual level of the highest visible cloud-layer of Jupiter, melted quickly into the form of invisible vapour, and thus a layer lower than usual by as many thousand miles came into view, forming for the time the planet's apparent outline in that place? According to the first theory, a surface much larger than the whole surface of our earth sank through a depth greater than the whole distance from the earth's surface to her centre. The intense heat which is regarded with such disfavour by followers of the old-fashioned ideas (really based on the Ptolemaic astronomy), if it had had no existence before, would have been generated by so tremendous a downfall, which indeed could not have taken place without vulcanian heat, exceeding in intensity what the other theory presents as the natural consequence of Jupiter's mode of formation. According to this second theory, the rising of the cloud-layer even to so great an elevation as 2,000 miles above the usual level of the highest Jovian clouds, was an exceptional phenomenon indeed, but by no means incredible; while the

rapid dissipation of the cloud was not only quite easily to be explained, but corresponded with changes which have been observed to take place among cloud-layers seen on the disc itself. If a vast cloud-layer can disappear in a few minutes from view, above one part of the planet's surface, so also it can above another. One part may chance to lie on the visible disc of the planet; another may chance to lie on the edge of the disc; for these parts of the disc only bear relation to our point of view, not to the planet itself; and while a change occurring in one part would make a belt or spot seem to form or disappear, one occurring in the other position would make the apparent outline of the planet seem to bulge or shrink, as the case might be. Nay, we may add one consideration which would render the dissipation of a high cloud-layer in the position where Jupiter's outline appeared swollen, even more naturally to be accounted for than the often observed dissipation of a cloud-layer on the disc itself. For the cloud-layer which vanished on that occasion had just been carried into sunlight by the planet's rotation; and we can readily understand how the solar heat, slight though its effects may be compared with those of Jupiter's own internal heat, might bring about the dissolution of a cloud-layer which chanced to be in that critical stage where a slight cause will bring about either rapid formation or rapid dissipation of visible cloud.

The chief difficulty, of course, in the theory, or rather the most surprising result of the demonstrated fact that Jupiter's visible cloud-layer thus changed, resides in the enormous depth we have to assign to the cloud-supporting atmosphere. We have already shown in these pages* that, *ceteris paribus*, the atmosphere of Jupiter would be much shallower—layer for layer—than our earth's, simply because the planet's mighty attractive power would more strongly compress it. That it is manifestly not thus compressed indicates, as we then showed, the intensity of the heat pervading its whole extent. But that it should range to a height of thousands of miles above the true surface of the planet, does certainly seem at first amazing. Yet be it remembered that not only is such an inference demonstrably correct, as we have just shown, but it also follows necessarily from the comparison already instituted between Jupiter and the earth in respect of mass and density. If we assign to the solid globe of Jupiter the same mean density as the earth has—or, rather, if we imagine the totality of material, whence millions of years hence his solid globe is to be formed, gathered into a globe having the same mean density as the earth—we find for this globe a diameter of 53,000 miles, less than his present apparent diameter by nearly 32,000 miles; so that the level of his surface in that condition would lie 16,000 miles below his present surface, the space between the two surfaces, or the total shrinkage of Jupiter's volume, amounting to about 930 times the volume of this earth on which we live. As we have every reason to believe that (in a general sense) all the planets are constructed of the same materials

* Cornhill Magazine, for May, 1872.

not very differently proportioned, we are compelled to admit this vast expansion of Jupiter's present dimensions, and can therefore very well understand even such mighty changes of apparent surface-level as the observation of Admiral Smyth, Sir T. Maclear, and Dr. Peacock certainly shows to have taken place.

But now, reverting to our earth's history during the period corresponding to that through which Jupiter is now passing, let us consider whether the ocean, converted by heat into great cloud-masses floating through hundreds, if not thousands, of miles above the glowing surface-crust, would not produce yet other appearances such as distant observers might have been able to note.

When the shadow of the moon falls now upon the earth during a solar eclipse, it may either wholly or in part reach the actual surface of the earth, or be intercepted partly or wholly by cloud-layers. If an observer on Venus or on Mercury were to watch the earth when undergoing eclipse in this way, the apparent shape of the shadow would not be in any appreciable degree modified by such variations in the manner of the shadow's fall, unless very powerful telescopes were employed. For the cloud-layers of our air lie but a few miles above the surface of the earth,* and the apparent displacement of a part of the moon's shadow, intercepted by a cloud-layer, would be correspondingly small, and in fact undiscernible from Venus or Mercury. But if the atmosphere were very deep, and the cloud-layers separated from each other and from the earth by hundreds of miles, the case would be different. To illustrate the nature of the appearances which might be expected, let us consider the case of a balloon suspended in full sunlight above a layer of fleecy clouds, the layer intercepting a portion of the sun's light, but not all of it. If the layer intercepted all the sun's light, then, of course, a shadow of the balloon would be thrown upon the cloud-layer, this shadow appearing as one, whether seen from the balloon itself, or from the higher parts (let us say) of a lofty mountain reaching far above the layer of clouds. But, the layer not intercepting all the light, a portion of the rays pass on to illuminate the ground everywhere except where the balloon has intercepted the sun's rays. That is to say, there is another shadow on the ground upon the prolongation of lines drawn from the balloon to the shadow on the clouds. These two shadows seen from the balloon itself would appear as one, both lying in the same direction; but they would be separately discernible from a station on the mountain height. Neither would appear quite black; for the higher would lie on clouds through which the observer would receive light from the illuminated ground below, which he would partially see, while the lower shadow would be seen through the illuminated cloud-layer whose light would partially conceal the blackness of the

* Much less is known than might be respecting the height of the loftier cloud-layers. Coxwell and Glaisher, in their highest aerial flights, saw the cirrus clouds apparently as high above them as when seen from the ground. The height of such clouds could be quite easily determined by taking photographs, with suitably adjusted instruments, from either end of a measured base-line a mile or two in length.

shadow. If the cloud-layer were *very* thin, the upper shadow would be the least distinct; if the clouds without being dense yet suffered but a small quantity of direct sunlight to pass between and through their fleecy texture, the upper shadow would be very dark, the lower scarcely visible. Now replace the balloon by the moon, and the observer upon the mountain height by a distant astronomer on Venus or Mercury, and we perceive that at times, when (in the distant period we are considering) the shadow of the moon fell on a very lofty layer of fleecy clouds, while the shadow so falling would be plainly visible, another fainter one would be discernible on a lower cloud-layer, whose existence and relative position would in this way be indicated to the thoughtful observer. Or, if many layers of thin and fleecy clouds, or a single deep layer of such clouds, existed, then either a set of shadows getting fainter and fainter at each successive layer* would be seen, or else a long cone of shadow passing through the range of the deep cloud-layer.

Now let us see whether Jupiter, the most conveniently placed of all the younger planets for purposes of observation, shows such appearances as these. Let it be premised that *ordinarily* we could not expect to see them, except on very rare occasions, when some exceptionally thin and fleecy cloud-layer, lying very high, received the first shadow, allowing another to be formed on a cloud-layer lying many hundreds of miles below. It would probably be as rare to detect such appearances, supposing them specially searched for (which has never yet happened), as it would be to observe such a phenomenon as the reappearance of a satellite. And manifestly the lower shadow must be hundreds if not thousands of miles below the upper to be separately seen, since the shadow of a satellite would be about 2,000 miles in diameter, and the earth is so close to the sun compared with Jupiter that the line of sight to the planet is never more than slightly inclined to a line from the sun to the planet. Manifestly, if we looked exactly in the same direction as the sun's rays fall, we should not see the shadow at all; looking in a direction slightly inclined, we see the shadow thrown somewhat on one side of the satellite (never *very* far); a lower shadow would be thrown somewhat farther in the same direction, but only (in proportion) very slightly. To be thrown as much as 2,000 miles on one side so as to seem clear of the first shadow, the distance of the lower layer from the upper must be several thousand miles. As for seeing such a cone of shadow as is referred to in the last sentence of the preceding paragraph, that could scarce ever happen. In fact, if the requisite conditions existed, the chances would be that the lengthened shadow would be too faint to be seen at all. In

* The shadows themselves would not grow fainter and fainter, but would be black right through the range along which they would lie; for no part of the sun's rays would reach any one of the spaces in shadow. But seen as they would be through partially transparent cloud-layers, and seen also as the partially illuminated cloud-layers would be *through* the shadows, these necessarily would grow less and less distinct the deeper they lay.

like manner it might chance that where in reality there was a second shadow it would not be discernible, and the only perceptible effect be that the first shadow would not appear so dark as usual. Probably, on the whole, these being the actual conditions, the reader may consider that it should be all but hopeless to look for any such phenomena as we have referred to, among the recorded observations of the planet.

Let us see how this may be, however. Turning to Webb's little work, *Celestial Objects for Common Telescopes*, in which we may always expect to find the record of uncommon telescopic observations, we come across the following interesting passage: "Cassini once failed in finding the shadow of the nearest satellite when it should have been upon the disc. Gorton saw it grey on one occasion. The shadow of the second satellite has been seen specially indistinct by Buffham, Birt, and Grover. South many years ago published in one of the public journals a most interesting observation, which I greatly regret that I cannot recover; but I am confident as to its tenour, which was, that in his great telescope he perceived each of two shadows of satellites on Jupiter to be attended by a faint duplicate by its side, traces of which could be just detected with a smaller telescope of (I believe) five feet," in focal length. Again, in Chambers's *Descriptive Astronomy*, it is stated that "on April 5, 1861, Mr. T. Barneby saw the shadow of the third satellite first in the shape of a broad dark streak such as the cone of the shadow would present in a slanting direction, 'but it shortly afterwards appeared as a circular spot, perfectly dark.'"

Yet one other observation pointing in the same direction. If the lower shadow of a satellite can be at any time distinguished from the upper, then, should a great cloud-mass be floating at the higher level, *its* shadow ought to be similarly discernible, projecting to the same extent from under the cloud itself; which would hide the greater portion, but not all, of its own shadow. Now Mr. J. Brett, the eminent landscape painter, who from time to time employs his eye, well cultured to discern varieties of tint, upon the celestial bodies, wrote thus in a paper read before the Astronomical Society in May 1874: "I wish to call attention to a particular feature of Jupiter's disc, which [the feature, that is] appears to me very well defined at the present time, and seems to afford evidence respecting the physical condition of the planet. The large white patches which occur on and about the equatorial zone and interrupt the continuity of the dark belts are well known to all observers, and the particular point in connection with them to which I beg leave to call attention is that *they cast shadows*; that is to say, the light patches are rounded on the side farthest from the sun by a dark border shaded off softly towards the light, and showing in a distinct manner that the patches are projected or relieved from the body of the planet. The evidence which this observation is calculated to afford refers to the question whether the opaque body of the planet is seen in the dark belts or the bright ones, and points to the conclusion that it is not seen at all in either of them, but that all we see of Jupiter consists

of semi-transparent materials. The particular fact from which this inference would be drawn, is, that the dark sides of the suspended or projected masses are not sufficiently hard or sharply defined for shadows falling upon an opaque surface, neither are they sharper upon the light background than upon the dark." This point Mr. Brett proceeds to deal with by reasoning which has a special value because relating to a subject in which he is an expert. "The laws of light and shade upon opaque bodies," he remarks, "are very simple and very absolute; and one of the most rudimentary of them is that every body has its light, its shade, and its shadow, the relations between which are constant; and that the most conspicuous and persistent edge or limit in this association of elements is the boundary of the shadow; the shadow being radically different from the shade in that its intensity is uniform throughout in any given instance, and is not affected by the form of the surface on which it is cast, whereas the shade is distinguished by attributes of an opposite character. Now if the dark spaces adjoining the light patches on Jupiter, which I have called shadows, are not shadows at all, but shades, it is obvious that the opaque surface of the planet on which the shadows should fall is concealed; whereas, if they are shadows, their boundaries are so soft and undefined as to lead to the conclusion that they are cast upon a semi-transparent body, which allows the shadow to be seen, indeed, but with diminishing distinctness towards its edge, according to the acuteness of its angle of incidence. Either explanation of the phenomenon may be the true one; but they both lead to the same conclusion—namely, that neither the dark belts nor the bright ones are opaque, and that if Jupiter has any nucleus at all, it is not visible to us. . . . By the kind invitation of Mr. Lassell I had an opportunity, on the 20th of April, of examining the disc with his twenty-feet reflector of two-feet aperture, and I found this large instrument confirm my impressions concerning the shadows in the most satisfactory manner."

There remains one peculiarity in the appearances resulting from the earth's condition during the remote period we are dealing with, which might possibly, though perhaps *barely*, have been detected by observers on Venus or Mercury. The shadow cast by the earth upon the moon—that is, the true shadow, not the mere penumbra—has a round shape, corresponding to the fact that the body casting it is a globe. But of old, when irregular cloud-masses and cloud-layers, various in shape and extent, were suspended in the deep atmosphere of our planet, it must necessarily have happened that at times the outline of the shadow was irregular, and that in a marked degree. The irregularity, in fact, would correspond closely in degree with the occasional irregularity of the earth's apparent figure arising from the same cause (though it is possible that it might have been at times more clearly discernible, as not affected to quite the same degree by irradiation). Now here is a peculiarity which we could not expect to recognise in the case of our heretofore chief test-planet, Jupiter. No telescope yet made by man, probably no

telescope man ever will make, would show peculiarities in the shape of Jupiter's shadow on one of his satellites. No one has ever yet claimed to have seen the outline of that shadow at all, far less to have been able to discern its true shape; and it is not likely that any one ever will. But in this case the planet Saturn may help us; for *his* shadow is not merely cast at times upon the small discs of his distant moons, but rests constantly upon the broad expanse of his mighty rings—

While Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring—

and that shadow we can study, despite the vast distance of the planet, with a fair chance of detecting peculiarities in its shape, should such at any time exist.

Let it be noticed at the outset that it is perfectly easy to calculate what the shape of the shadow *should* be, if Saturn were a solid globe and the rings' surface perfectly flat. The astronomer knows that at one time, on these assumptions, the shadow would be hidden, at another visible above or below the planet's globe; at one time to the east of the globe, at another to the west, and always with an elliptical (but very nearly circular) outline, not quite sharply defined, but with a slight fringe of shading only discernible in powerful telescopes. In like manner we may note, in passing, that the shape of the rings' shadow on the globe would always be calculable; and we know that, when visible at all, it should appear as a black curved streak, either above or below the ring, and perfectly smooth in outline. Again, whatever irregularities there may be in the level of the rings can very little affect the apparent shape of either shadow, because we know from the edge view of the rings that such irregularities are slight compared with the thickness of the rings, which itself is not great. So that any irregularities of a marked character in either shadow must be referred to that cause alone which is competent to produce them; viz., irregularity in the cloud-layers and cloud-masses floating in the deep atmosphere of the planet.

So much premised, let us see what the records gathered by astronomers have to tell us on this point. We turn to a series of papers on the planet Saturn in the *Intellectual Observer* for 1866, by Mr. Webb, and we find the portion relating to the shadows opening thus: "From an early period, irregularities have been remarked in the form of the shadows which the globe and ring mutually cast upon each other." Mr. Webb deals first with the shadow of the ring, with which at present we are not directly concerned; though, of course, any irregularities in that shadow, like the irregularities in the shadows of Jupiter's moons, already described, indicate the depth and the occasionally irregular arrangement of the cloud-envelopes. Mr. Webb, in fact, after describing such irregularities, rejects, first, the theory that they are caused by irregularities in the ring; secondly, the theory that the globe's surface is irregular; and, thirdly, the theory that the ring has an atmosphere through which the sun's rays are irregularly refracted,—in fine, "passing over this difficulty as insoluble," which is not a very satisfactory result. Going on to

consider the shape of the shadow of the planet on the rings, he mentions, first, how such first-rate observers as Sir W. Herschel, Lassell, Dawes, and Secchi saw the outline of the shadow concave, instead of convex. Next, Dawes on one occasion saw the shadow irregular in outline where it crossed the bright ring. In October, 1852, Lassell saw the shadow on both sides of the globe. The younger Bond, of Harvard, Mass., saw the same; on November 2, saw the shadow *winged*. November 3, Tuttle saw the shadow on both sides, on which he *naïvely* asks: "What can this mean?" On November 29, De la Rue saw the shadow on both sides, and wrote: "This is very remarkable, but there can be no question as to the fact;" both shadows looked "like objects seen by mirage"—a remarkable expression. Then we find these observers, and others of equal repute, describing the shadow as having horns, ears, a "roof" (pictured with two projecting eaves), an inlet, a single ear, a reversed edge. Secchi writes: "*L'ombre assez curieuse, elle est renversée et ondulée.*" On one occasion Bond saw two shadows—one black, the other "a narrow, ghost-like shade." Of this faint shadow he says: "I was much impressed by the fact that the outline was preserved perfectly, while the intensity of the shadow was very feeble." Was not this *certainly* either the faint shadow of a deep partially transparent cloud-layer, or a dark shadow seen *through* such a layer?

After enumerating a number of such cases, Mr. Webb proceeds: "Thus far extend our facts. What shall we say in explanation of them? Can we charge them upon personal or instrumental peculiarities? * It seems not possible, since, in the main, they are agreed upon in England and Italy, and Malta, and India, and the United States. Some of the most singular statements, it is true, come from America alone. But, as they have often the concurrence of more than one observer, so the optical capacity of a telescope, which in favourable air would bear distinctly a power stated to be 1,560, leaves small chance of appeal." (He might have added that the American astronomers were second to none in observing skill, and that the American skies are particularly favourable for observations of the class in question.) "In fact, it is," Mr. Webb proceeds, "a remarkable circumstance that the mystery of the subject has increased under closer, more powerful, and more extended scrutiny. Some of the phenomena may admit of a more or less probable solution. For instance, the apparent concavity of outline might be explained as a deception similar to those optical perversities illustrated by Mr. Proctor," in an article on Saturn's square-shouldered aspect. "But the 'ears' projecting, even when the true shadow was invisible—the two shadows, when one only should have been seen—the 'roof' and 'inlet,' and the varying depths of shade in different parts, are alike too clearly attested for doubt, and too incomprehensible for explanation." (*Cela dépend.*) "We might take refuge to a certain extent in the idea of varied curvatures in the shadowed surfaces; and, in order to meet the objection arising from

* We have altered a word here, and perhaps marred the sentence; but the original word "equation" would have no meaning for many readers of these pages.

the evanescent thinness of the rings," we might "speculate on some force emanating from the sun disturbing the level of the rings. But even after we have ventured this daring" (and, in fact, impossible) "effort, we find other features as intractable as ever. Some things look like effects of an atmosphere very irregularly distributed round the ball, and possessed of properties greatly dissimilar to those of ordinary gases; but this is undiscoverable, just where it ought to be most apparent," where the remoter parts of the ring meet the outline of the disc obliquely.

But there is not one of these phenomena which cannot be explained by the theory of a very deep atmosphere, not "irregularly distributed," or "possessing properties greatly dissimilar to those of ordinary gases," but irregularly laden with cloud-masses. In fact, these occasional peculiarities in the shadow are thus brought into exact correlation with the peculiarities observed occasionally in the planet's shape, as noted in the first part of this paper.

We might note here other circumstances in the earth's youthful condition. For instance, from time to time the ruddy glow of her intensely-heated surface must have been visible through breaks in her cloud-layers; and just such occasional views of Jupiter's heated surface seem to have been obtained on those occasions when the usually cream-white equatorial belt has shone with a ruddy colour. But this consideration, and others connected with the quantity of light received from Jupiter and Saturn, have already been dealt with at considerable length in these pages.

It appears to us, in fine, that all the evidence, both *à priori* and *à posteriori*, corresponds with the theory which we have brought before the reader, that a planet during its extreme youth has its oceans floating in the form of cloud-masses and cloud-layers in a very deep atmosphere. We have seen reason, first, for believing that the intense heat of a planet, for many ages after its first formation, would keep the oceans in this cloud-like condition. Then, looking around for planets such as we might suppose to be much younger than the earth, we have seen that Jupiter and Saturn, the giant planets of the solar system, are probably the youngest (in this sense), always excepting the sun, which is in an earlier stage than any member of his family. And, considering what appearances a planet with a very deep cloud-laden atmosphere might be expected to present, we have found that just such appearances are presented by the planets Jupiter and Saturn, the phenomena described not being seen at all times, but occasionally, and in varying degree, precisely as we should expect from the variable causes producing them. We have also seen that the small density of the giant planets cannot readily be otherwise explained than by the theory that we do not see their real surface, but the outer surface of cloud-layers enveloping them. Moreover, while not a single fact known about the great planets is opposed to this theory, there are some facts, as we have seen, which cannot *possibly* be explained on any other theory. But when so much as this can be said of any theory, the theory may be regarded as established.

When the earth and sea were young, then, the earth's whole frame was

intensely heated. Her real surface was doubtless partly solid and partly liquid then, as now; but the solid portion glowed with ruddy and in places with white heat, while the liquid portions, instead of being water, as now, were formed of molten rock. Above this surface, with its "tracts of fluent heat," was the fiery atmosphere of that primeval time, enormously deep, complex in constitution, bearing enormous masses of aqueous vapour, and every form of cloud and cloud-layer, swept by mighty hurricanes whose breath was flame, drenched with showers so heavy that they might rather be called floods, and tortured by the uprush of the vaporous masses formed as these floods fell hissing on the earth's fiery surface.

After myriads of centuries came the time when the surface so far cooled as no longer to glow with ruddy light, and no longer to reject by vaporising the waters which fell upon it. Then a fearful darkness prevailed beneath the still mighty canopy of cloud; for only little by little, by very slow degrees, would the water descend upon the earth's surface. Some, indeed, have thought that it was this stage of the earth's past which was described in the Bible words: "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep;" noting, in particular, that the coming of light (because of the descent of the waters upon the earth, according to this view) was followed by the separation of waters under the firmament from waters above the firmament, (that

Expanse of liquid, pure,

Transparent, elemental air.)

the waters under the heaven being next gathered together into one place, and so forth. But we must confess that this interpretation of the narrative, sometimes called the vision interpretation, seems to us very far-fetched and unnatural; though we are in no way concerned here to oppose it, deeming it only necessary to mention that, for our own part, we cannot doubt that the writer of the narrative wished to be understood as describing what really occurred, not appearances shown to him in a vision.

A question which has long been regarded as among the great mysteries of nature—the question, How did the seas become salt—seems to us to find a ready solution when we consider that the ocean once formed the earth's cloud-envelope. We may, in fact, regard the oceans as holding in solution what was washed from the earth or otherwise extracted from its substance during the ages when the waters of ocean were passing from their former to their present condition. For then all the conditions assisted the action of the waters themselves—the intense heat of the earth's crust and of the atmosphere, the tremendous atmospheric pressure, and consequently the high boiling point (so that the waters first formed on the earth's heated crust must have been far hotter than is boiling water at the present time), and the presence also in the atmosphere of many vapours which would greatly help the decomposing action of the water itself. Consider, for instance, the following description, abridged from a paper by Dr. Sterry Hunt, the eminent Canadian chemist and geologist.

After showing that carbonic acid, chlorine, and sulphurous acids would be present in enormous quantities in the primeval atmosphere, besides, of course, still vaster quantities of the vapour of water, he proceeds: "These gases, with nitrogen and an excess of oxygen, would form an atmosphere of great density. In such an atmosphere, condensation would only take place at a temperature far above the present boiling point; and the lower levels of the earth's slowly cooling crust would be drenched with a heated solution of hydrochloric acid, whose decomposing action, aided by its high temperature, would be exceedingly rapid. The primitive igneous rock on which these showers fell probably resembled in composition certain furnace slags or volcanic glasses." The process of decomposition would continue "under the action of the heavy showers until the affinities of the hydrochloric acid were satisfied. Later, larger quantities of sulphuric acid would be formed, and drenching showers of heated solutions of this energetic dissolvent would fall upon the earth's heated crust. After the compounds of sulphur and chlorine had been separated from the air, carbonic acid would still continue to be an important constituent of the atmosphere. It would be gradually diminished in gravity," through chemical processes resulting in the formation of various clays, "while the separated lime, magnesia, and alkalis, changed into bicarbonates, would be carried down to the sea in a state of solution."

Here we seem to see a fair account rendered of the enormous quantity of matter forming collectively what is called the brine of the ocean, and containing, besides common salt (chloride of sodium), sulphuric acid, magnesia, soda, sulphate of lime, and other substances. The theory that these substances have been washed from the earth's surface by causes such as are now in progress, would not, we think, be seriously entertained if the vast amount of matter thus present in the waters of the sea were remembered and considered. Brine forms, on the average, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of sea-water. Hence, if we take the average depth of the ocean at two miles,* or, roundly, 10,000 feet, it follows that, if all the water of the sea were evaporated, there would be left a deposit of salt averaging 350 feet in depth all over the present floor of the sea.

* In Maury's *Physical Geography of the Sea* there is a passage which we take to be one of the most amusing ever written in a work of the kind. The idea would seem to have occurred to him of estimating how much surface the salts of the sea would cover to the depth of a mile; and while in the midst of the calculation, he would seem to have grown weary of it. At least we cannot otherwise understand how he came to pen the following singular remarks: "Did any one who maintains that the salts of the sea were originally washed down into it by the rivers and the rains ever take the trouble to compute the quantity of solid matter that the sea holds in solution as salts? Taking the average depth of the ocean at three miles, and its average saltiness at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., it appears that there is salt enough in the sea to cover to the thickness of one mile an area of *several millions of square miles.*" (The italics are ours.) This passage reminds us of one in an early volume of *Household Words*, where a very amusing account was given of the stores of wine in the London Docks, over which the writer is supposed to be shown, collecting materials, *but also tasting wine*, as he proceeds. The gradually increasing effect of the wine-

This would correspond in quantity to salt covering all the present land surface of the earth to a depth of a thousand feet, or to a deposit *two hundred feet deep over the entire surface of the globe*; so that the idea of its having been washed from the land is altogether inadmissible. It may, indeed, be urged that, as the process of washing down from the land is continually going on, only a sufficiency of time would be needed to account for any quantity whatever of sea-salt. But apart from the fact that only a certain thickness of the solid crust, and that thickness by no means very great, could be drawn upon for the supply, and that the very continuance of the process shows us that even that portion of the earth's crust has not been drained of its salts, there is every reason to believe that the extraction of salt from the sea is going on and has been going on for many ages past at fully as great a rate as the addition of fresh salts. Although the process of evaporation cannot remove the salts, these, as Maury justly notes, can be extracted by other processes. "We know," he says, "that the insects of the sea do take out a portion of them, and that the salt-ponds and arms which from time to time in the geological calendar have been separated from the sea, afford an escape by which the quantity of chloride of sodium in its waters—the most abundant of its solid ingredients—is regulated. The insects of the sea cannot build their structures of this salt, for it would dissolve again as fast as they could separate it. But here the ever-ready atmosphere comes into play, and assists the insects in regulating the salts. It cannot take them [the salts] up from the sea, it is true, but it can take the sea away from them; for it pumps up the water from these pools that have been barred off, transfers it to the clouds, and they deliver it back to the sea as fresh water, leaving behind the salts it contained in a solid state. These are operations which have been going on for ages; proof that they are still going on is con-

tasting is indicated very humorously. In one of the later stages of his progress, the writer enters into a computation of the amount of wine wasted in the process of cleansing the glass with wine. (We write from memory, and possibly, as many years have passed since we read the passage, we may not be correct in details.) Assuming so much wasted at each cleansing, so many visitors, each tasting so many times, and so forth, "then," says the writer, "it may be shown that in each year 800 bottles, or it may be 8,000 bottles, of wine are wasted. And should any one object that there is a considerable difference between 800 and 8,000, all we have to say is that the principle is the same," &c. Captain Maury passes on, however, without any allusion to the somewhat unexpected vagueness of his conclusion. "These millions of cubic miles of crystal salt have not made the sea any fuller," he proceeds. "All that solid matter has been received into the interstices of sea-water without swelling the mass; for chemists tell us that water is not increased in volume by the salt it dissolves. Here we have, therefore, an economy of space calculated to surprise even the learned author himself of the *Plurality of Worlds*." All which, so far as appears, is *apropos de bottles*. Within the same page, which, we submit, is inferior to Maury's usual style, we find him, in dealing with the question What was the Creator's main object in making the sea salt? advancing the startling proposition that "all the objects of the salts of the sea are *main* objects." (The nature of the context, which is serious, even solemn, will not allow us to suppose that any pun was here intended.)

tinually before our eyes; for the 'hard water' of our fountains, the marl-banks of the valleys, the salt-beds of the plains, Albion's chalky cliffs, and the coral islands of the sea are monuments in attestation."

We must, then, regard the salts of the sea as in the main dissolved from the solid crust during that remote period when the seas were young. The seas thus indicate to us the nature of those vast chemical processes through which the earth had to pass in the earlier stages of its history. If the present crust of the earth did not afford, as it does, the clearest evidence of a time when the earth's whole frame glowed with intense heat; if we could not, as we can, derive from the movements of the celestial bodies, as well as from the telescopic appearance of some among them, the most certain assurance that all the planets, nay, the whole of the solar system itself, were once in the state of glowing vapour; the ocean brine—the mighty residuum, left after the earth had passed through its baptism of liquid fire, would leave us in little doubt respecting the main features at least of the earth's past history. The seas could never have attained their present condition had not the earth which they encompassed when they were young been then an orb of fire. Every wave that pours in upon the shore speaks to us of so remote a past that all ordinary time-measures fail us in the attempt to indicate the length of the vast intervals separating us from it. The saltiness of the ocean is no minor feature or mere detail of our globe's economy, but has a significance truly cosmical in its importance. Tremendous indeed must have been the activity of those primeval processes, fierce the heat of those primeval fires, under whose action sixty thousand millions of millions of tons of salts were extracted from the earth's substance and added to its liquid envelope.

[Since this essay was in type, a paper has been read before the Astronomical Society by Mr. Brett, describing observations altogether inexplicable, except by the theory we have advocated above. They relate to the movements of two large white spots on Jupiter's chief belt. Both these spots were so shadowed as to indicate that they were in reality bodies of globular shape,—no doubt rounded masses of cloud, floating in the relatively transparent atmosphere of the planet. "The fact that they are wholly immersed in the semi-transparent material of the planet is indisputable," says Mr. Brett, "since they gradually disappear as they approach the" edge of the disc, "and in no case have been seen to project beyond it." The distinguishing peculiarity of these bodies was, however, their rapid motion, as though gaining on the planet's rotation. The average motion was estimated by Mr. Brett at about 165 miles per hour, but this estimate would have been somewhat reduced had he taken into account, as he should have done, the changing position of the earth, relatively to Jupiter. Still, even after adding to this reduction all that can possibly be attributed to errors of observation, there remains a considerable motion of these cloud-masses, each of which was about half as large as the whole globe of the earth! It may, perhaps, be thought that we have here attached too much weight to the telescopic observations of one who is skilled rather in art than in science; and in fairness it must be admitted that about half Mr. Brett's observations have been regarded more than doubtfully by astronomers. But this observation, like the one described in the body of the above essay, depends only on accuracy in estimating the apparent position of two spots on the planet's face; and so skillful a draughtsman as Mr. Brett cannot have made any large error in an observation of the kind.]

Bushman Folk-lore.

In its widest sense the term folk-lore may be said to include all those stories, traditions, legends, superstitions, and customs, which are woven into the daily life of the bulk of a people, and which, in the case of Christianised peoples, are the relics or "survivals" of what were once their religious beliefs and observances. In the case of unchristianised peoples, folk-lore and mythology are almost synonymous. This is well illustrated by the Esquimaux tales and traditions, which have been collected by Dr. Rink and recently translated into English, and in the Bushman folk-lore, a few specimens of which may interest our readers.

Some people may be inclined to think lightly of collections of folk-lore, as if of no more value than an idle tale; not so the scientific student of history and ethnology. The mythology of a people will generally be found to faithfully reflect their character. If a people are cowardly and cunning, or brave and magnanimous, or sensual and cruel, these characteristics will appear prominently in the mythological lore which has been developed from their contact with other people and from the phenomena of nature which are continually being forced upon their notice. Moreover the folk-lore of a people is of great importance in enabling us to trace their early history and migrations, and by comparison of the folk-lore of various nations, important and interesting and in the main trustworthy inferences have been drawn as to the early history of a large section of the human race. We need only point to what has been done in this respect in the case of the Indo-European or Aryan family of nations, of which we ourselves are a branch, and to what is being done by Mr. George Smith of the British Museum and others, in the case of the Semitic peoples. Ethnologists are quite alive to the value of this department of research, and important collections have been made of the folk-lore of uncivilised races in various parts of the world. But much yet remains to be done, and "'twere well it were done quickly," for not only are many uncivilised races dying out—the Tasmanians are already extinct and the years of the North American Indians are numbered—but continued contact with white men and the acquisition of civilised beliefs and habits have quite an adulterating effect on savage folk-lore. Happily the South African people known as Bushmen have been taken just in time, for in a very few years increasing intercourse with whites will have materially metamorphosed them, to use a geological term; a very considerable portion of their folk-lore has now been committed to writing. The man who, under many difficulties, and with great painstaking and self-denial, has made this important contribution to our knowledge of

Africa, is Dr. Bleek, well known in connection with South African ethnology and philology, but unhappily now no more: he died in harness last August, at Cape Town, where he had lived for many years.

The Cape Government allowed Dr. Bleek a small sum yearly to defray the expenses connected with his researches among the Bushmen, but this grant was never sufficient to meet the costs incurred. Two reports have been presented to the Cape Parliament, containing analyses and a few specimens of the Bushman folk-lore collected by Dr. Bleek, but the great bulk of his collections, amounting to about eighty quarto manuscript volumes, remains unpublished. Dr. Bleek's family are endeavouring to raise a fund in Europe for the purpose of publishing these valuable collections, and there are so many eminent men both in this country and on the continent who have taken an interest in the devoted scholar's work, that no doubt a sufficient sum will ultimately be obtained.

Dr. Bleek's method of collecting these Bushman stories is a strong evidence of his self-denying devotion to the task he had set himself. Instead of his going to the Bushmen, to live among whom the state of his health did not admit, he got the Bushmen to come to him. He actually had the courage to maintain in his house various Bushman families, husbands, wives, children, and other relations, whom he got to recite to him the tales, traditions, and legends, that constitute their folk-lore. Those who know anything of savage habits cannot but admire Dr. Bleek's enthusiasm and patient endurance; especially when it is remembered that Bushmen are classed with Australians and Andaman Islanders as among the lowest types of humanity,—though on this point there may now be some reason for doubt.

Everybody knows of the peculiar click which is characteristic of the Bushman and other South African languages; so difficult is it to render this so-called click by the letters of our alphabet that Dr. Bleek in his report uses a special sign for it, and indeed has to use a special type for all native words.

Dr. Bleek, in his second report which has reached this country, divides the Bushman folk-lore into two main classes,—1st. Mythology, Fables, Legends, and Poetry; 2nd, History (Natural and Personal). The most prominent of the mythological figures is the insect known as the Mantis, around which a great circle of myths has been formed. This Mantis (*Mantis precaria* of zoologists) is an insect of a beautiful green colour, nearly three inches in length and closely allied to another species which, from the peculiar bent form of its fore-legs, is known as *Mantis religiosa*, or the "praying mantis." Besides his own proper name, which as far as our ordinary letters can render it is *Ikäggen*, the Mantis possesses among the Bushmen several others, and so also does his wife, whose most usual name is an awful jaw-breaker,—*Uññntulatlatten*. Their adopted daughter, the Porcupine, has by her husband a son, the Ichneumon, who plays an important part in Bushman mythology, particularly in advising and assisting the Mantis, and in chiding him for his misdeeds.

The following is one of many curious myths in which this Mantis plays a prominent part.

The Mantis is said to have taken away a shoe belonging to his son-in-law, the father of the Ichneumon, and converted it into an eland, of which he made a pet, placing it among the reeds, and going thither from time to time to feed it with honey. The Ichneumon was then sent out to discover why the Mantis brought no honey home; but as the Mantis put him into a bag, while he called the eland from the reeds, the Ichneumon was at first unsuccessful. By the advice of his father, however, the Ichneumon cut a peep-hole in the sack, and the former on being told about the eland, shot it, after having enticed it with honey to come out of the reeds. The Mantis, having missed his pet, wept bitterly. Following his spoor or track, he saw blood, and later found some Suricats (the Suricat is a South African four-toed variety of Ichneumon) together with another person who was cutting it up. One of the Suricats threw the Mantis violently down upon the horns of the eland. He therefore, by piercing the gall of another eland, created a darkness, into which he sprang away, and returning home in pain, lay down, while the sun was still high. The Suricats cut the eland's flesh into slices, hanging it upon a tree to dry, and upon the same tree they hung their weapons and their skin clothing. In the night, while they were sleeping, the tree, laden with the possessions, rose up and passed through the air, descending where the Mantis lay, who, with the Ichneumon, on awaking, took possession of their enemies' things. One of the Suricats, with only his girdle left, which he made into a tail, returned home to be stared at and questioned by his wife.

The most competent authorities believe the Bushmen to be degenerate Hottentots, leading a wandering life in the borderland between more settled tribes; the Hottentots themselves are probably a race who have been dispossessed of much of their former possessions by the stronger and more intelligent Kaffir tribes. The Bushmen, it is well known, when mixing with Hottentots and other strangers, frequently speak an artificial language quite different from that which they ordinarily use, and which they alone understand. And it is a curious fact that in the many stories current among them in which animals play an important part, each animal speaks a language peculiar to itself, a modification of the ordinary Bushman dialect. For example, the Ichneumon's speech in the above myth, when the Mantis had deprived the Suricats of their possessions, is in the curious language in which the Ichneumon is supposed to speak, and in which all the clicks are converted into sounds like *ts*, *tsy*, *ty*, *dy*, &c.; and other modifications take place.

The Bushmen have two different myths to account for the origin of the moon; one of these forms an episode in the above story of the Mantis and his pet eland. When the Mantis sprang away from the Suricats in the darkness which he created by piercing the gall-bladder of another eland, he felt inconvenienced by one of his shoes, which he therefore took off and threw into the sky, with the order that it should

become the moon. Thus the moon is red, because the shoe of the Mantis was covered with the red dust of Bushmanland, and cold, because it is only leather. In the Bushman astrological lore, however, the Moon is looked upon as a man who incurs the wrath of the Sun, and is consequently pierced by the knife (i.e. rays) of the latter. This process is repeated until almost the whole of the Moon is cut away, and only one little piece is left, which the Moon piteously implores the Sun to spare for his (the Moon's) children. Then this little piece of the Moon gradually grows again until it becomes a full moon, when the Sun's stabbing and cutting processes recommence. This is a really beautiful myth, and reminds one strongly of the interpretations which Max Müller and his school have put upon some of the old Greek myths.

Animals, it will be seen, occupy a very large place in Bushman mythology, and this is not to be wondered at when it is considered how large is the place they fill in the Bushman country, and how important a part they play in the daily life of the people. As in the Indo-European mythologies, many of the stars and constellations are named after certain animals, and some of the astronomical myths are elaborate and beautiful, and sometimes even touching. The Sun, they say, is a man, from whose armpit brightness proceeded, and who lived formerly on earth, but only gave light for a space around his house. Some children who belonged to the first Bushmen (who preceded the Flat Bushmen in their country) were therefore sent to throw up the sleeping Sun into the sky; since then he shines all over the earth. A myth somewhat similar to this is met among the Australian Aborigines, and there are many points of resemblance between Bushman and Esquimaux mythology. But it would be extremely rash to infer, on this account, that there had been any original connection or communication between these races. Indeed we have hinted that analogies may be found between Bushman and European mythology, and it is not to be wondered at if many points of resemblance be found between mythologies originating quite independently of each other. For have not all uncivilised peoples the same mythological elements, if we may so call them, to deal with—"the heavens above, the earth beneath, and the water under the earth," with their various denizens? Have they not all pretty much the same kind of struggle for existence, and have they not that most fertile and universal of human characteristics, an irresistible desire to assign a cause to everything that comes within ken? In this last point mythology and science meet, for it is this same universal impulse which animates both—the desire of the human mind to satisfy itself as to the causes of things.

The Bushmen account for the origin of the Milky Way by relating how a girl of the ancient race wished for a little light, so that the people might see to return home at night. She, therefore, threw wood-ashes into the sky, which became the Milky Way. This same girl, being vexed with her mother for giving her too little of a certain red edible root, threw up portions of it into the sky, where they became stars. The

mention of an "ancient race" in this and other myths is one among other indications that the Bushmen are not genuine South African aborigines, but that they are intruders upon a still older race.

Among some of the stars which have been identified with animals in Bushman mythology are the following: The pointers to the Southern Cross are male lions, while the stars *Alpha*, *Beta*, and *Gamma* Crucis are lionesses. The two lions were formerly men, and at the same time lions, and one of them became a star because a girl looked at him; the other, apparently out of sympathy, also became a star. They now stand silent, not far from the lionesses, who sit silent. Aldebaran is a male hartebeest, while *Alpha* Orionis is a female hartebeest. Procyon is a male eland, whose wives are Castor and Pollux. The stars in Orion's Sword are male tortoises hung upon a stick, and the three bright stars in Orion's Belt are female tortoises, also hung upon a stick. The stars are divided into night stars and dawn stars, and the latter are the subjects of some very fine and complicated mythological conceptions, of which, however, only fragments have as yet been obtained. The planet Jupiter is called the "Dawn's-Heart," while some neighbouring star, preceding Jupiter, is the "Dawn's-Heart-Child," Jupiter's daughter. Her relation to her father is somewhat mysterious. He calls her, in the myth, "my heart," swallows her, then walks alone as the only Dawn's-Heart Star, till she grows up, when he spits her out again. She then herself becomes another female Dawn's-Heart, and spits out another Dawn's-Heart-Child, which follows the male and female Dawn's-Heart. The story proceeds in a very intricate fashion, and many other characters, all animals, are introduced.

The stories about animals in Bushman folk-lore seem to be innumerable, and certainly prove the possession by the inventors of a lively and fertile imagination. Dr. Bleek, as we have said, divides the folk-lore into various classes, but, judging from the specimens he gives, animals figure largely in the myths and legends of all the classes. Many of the myths seem to be of the nature of poetical compositions, besides which, under the head of Poetry, Dr. Bleek refers to a large number of pieces which are distinctly and professedly poetic. These are songs by various animals, incantations, prayers to the sun and to stars, and compositions having such touching titles as the "Return Home" and the "Mother's Last Illness."

Under the head of Customs and Superstitions, Dr. Bleek gives some very curious information. Bushmen have evidently a firm faith in the value of presentiments; but this is a faith which is co-extensive with the human race. Bushmen feel in their bodies that certain events are going to happen. There is a kind of beating of the flesh which tells these things. Those who are stupid do not understand these teachings; they disobey them and get into trouble, such as being killed by a lion, &c. The beatings tell those who can understand them which way they are not to go, which arrow they had better not use, and also warn them

as to approaching events, and where to look for what they are in search of. Many an old Scotchwoman, we dare say, might be found who cherishes similar beliefs. The Bushmen believe in a future state, and there are some touching stories in connection with death, in which the strength of the family tie is forcibly illustrated.

Bushmen, all things considered, are no mean artists; many caves in their country are covered with coloured drawings and pictures chipped into the rocks, some of them depicting scenes quite idyllic. Some of these pictures, Dr. Bleek tells us, are of the greatest possible interest, and evince an infinitely higher taste, and a far greater artistic faculty, than our liveliest imagination could have anticipated. Their publication, which it is hoped may ere long be effected, cannot, Dr. Bleek thinks, but effect a radical change in the ideas generally entertained with regard to the Bushmen and their mental condition. Altogether a perusal of Dr. Bleek's report, and of the numerous myths, legends, and stories which he gives as specimens, leads us to the conclusion that the mental calibre of the Bushman has hitherto been underrated. True he has so far proved almost intractable, incapable of civilisation, at least according to our notions of what that implies, utterly averse to settled habits, and having little or no capacity for business or for anything but the most meagre exercise of the reasoning powers. The mythological and artistic productions of Bushmen seem to show that they are "of imagination all compact," and that, low as they are in the human scale, they have given striking proofs of possessing in no mean degree that imaginative faculty which in the Aryan races has produced the Homeric legends, the Norse Sagas, and the grand old Celtic stories which Tennyson has woven into *Idylls of the King*.

We do not mean for a moment to place these Bushman myths on the same level with the immortal productions of the European mind; compared with the latter the former are the mere day-dreams of a child, though of a child possessed of a fertile and fine fancy. Bushmen, like other uncivilised races, are indeed in a state of national childhood; but whether, if they could be trained up to a state of national manhood, their imaginative powers would develop and strengthen in proportion, seems very doubtful. We fear, however, they are not likely to have the chance of proving this, for they seem doomed to go the way of all uncivilised races with whom the white man has hitherto come into contact. At all events, Dr. Bleek has produced enough to convince us that his collections of Bushman Folk-lore are well worthy of being published in full.

The Marchioness of Verneuil.

Nobody in the good old times suffered more from libel than Henri Quatre, and certainly nobody presented a fitter subject. He had been thrice a renegade; he was distrusted by every political faction; and his court—the last and probably the most romantic of the Renaissance—went far towards realising the Olympus of the classic poets. Its doings furnished ample occupation to trenchant pens; and one, keen as any, was wielded for a time by the delicate fingers of a girl of seventeen.

The youthful censor, Henriette de Balzac, belonged to a singular family. Her father, the Count d'Entragues, was an old Leaguer, whose fortune had suffered greatly during the troubles. Her mother, *née* Marie Touchet—a name twisted, according to a current fashion, into the phrase, “*Je charme tout*”—had been the mistress of Charles IX. Henriette had a sister too, yet a mere child, and a brother, who was also the son of Charles IX. This youth, then known as the Count d'Auvergne, was valiant, witty, adroit, and unscrupulous—the last being a quality that he took no pains to conceal; in fact, he was rather pleased than otherwise to be considered a consummate scoundrel. Not so the old mistress and the old Leaguer her husband. They were always studying that model book, Amyot's *Plutarch*, always eulogising the good old times, always blaming modern degeneracy, and everlastingly boring their hearers with the magnificent maxims of the sages. They set up, in short, for specimens of antique virtue. Their household, it need not be said, was a picture of decorum. All therein was precise and Puritanic. No such thing as hunting masses were tolerated in their chapel, and their “graces” were all of due length and drawl. As for other things, Entragues cudgelled his valets when he discovered them lying, swearing and dicing; while Marie Touchet pinched her maids whenever they happened to manifest a tendency to that unholy thing—flirtation. All this, of course, was for the edification of a naughty world. In private, matters progressed somewhat otherwise. The stoical old Count earned a handsome stipend as Spanish spy, and he did not hesitate to increase it by aiding the unstoical young Count in circulating the base money which the latter—following a fashion then prevalent in high life—manufactured largely. On her side, the Countess was fully occupied in training her eldest daughter to fill precisely such a post as she herself had vacated some twenty years before.

At seventeen Henriette proved a finished coquette, and her relatives thought it time to take measures for securing her the coveted establishment, which meant also an establishment for themselves. They adopted

a suitable course. The young lady was brought out in the autumn of 1598, and immediately a shower of epigrams of unusual point and severity began to fall upon the notabilities—the King and Gabrielle d'Estrees coming in for, by far, the largest share. Little notice was taken of them at first, but impunity rendered the writer bolder and the epigrams more pungent, until, by the close of the year, the authorities were compelled to interpose. A warrant was prepared for the expulsion of the whole family from the realm, and only suspended until an opportunity should offer for executing it without exciting too much scandal. News of the warrant soon reached the parties concerned, and great was their consternation; for the epigrams had been merely intended to attract the attention of the King to the authoress, whose charms, it was concluded, would do the rest. The unlooked-for result provoked a great row in the amiable family. Everybody blamed everybody else for the false move and its consequences. But they were too shrewd to come to an open rupture. Taking the most prudent course under the circumstances, they held together, withdrew to the country, and carefully abstained from everything that could offend either king or courtier. Yet all, perhaps, would have failed to avert exile, but for an unexpected event.

This event—the death of Gabrielle d'Estrees—merits discussion in its place, which, however, is not here. We shall, therefore, merely remark that it was attended by many suspicious circumstances, and was singularly favourable to certain interests. Gabrielle's death rendered Henri inconsolable for a month, during which he remained in seclusion at Fontainebleau. It was an age for a man of his temperament, so his courtiers were more pleased than surprised when, one May morning in 1599, he warned them to prepare for an early removal to Blois. The preparations were made at once, and rude and boisterous they were; for in those days monarchs seldom owned more than a single suite of furniture; and beds, hangings, pictures, plate, &c., always accompanied them in their migrations. It was an awkward plan, but it was much preferable to the earlier one, whereby the monarch and his merry men were enabled to move from palace to palace without encumbrance, since they could help themselves at the journey's end to whatever they needed from the houses of their subjects, according to the statutes of purveyance "in that case made and provided." The farmers round them were roused, and their carts and carters pressed into the royal service. The night was spent in pulling down and packing up, and by sunrise next morning the caravan was under weigh for the southwest. In the van rode a gallant troop of nobles, headed by the King. Behind came a "mixed multitude" of varlets, pages, horses and dogs; and in the rear straggled a long line of well-laden waggons; while, last of all, marched a detachment of light-horse, accompanied by the prevost-marshal and his executioner—the latter ready to do prompt justice on any of the light-fingered brotherhood that might be found making too free with the royal goods and chattels. Such marches, especially in the bachelor days of Henri Quatre, were emphatically easy ones. The journey was

divided into short stages, and its slow progress was enlivened by hawking, coursing, occasional quarrelling, and the old-fashioned device of story-telling. At night the carters encamped under guard, the servants were billeted in the villages, and their masters took up their quarters in the neighbouring châteaux.

The first day's march lay through that part of France whose fertility has won it the name of *le pays de rire et rien faire*. Towards its close, and while the King was speculating as to where he should lodge for the night, the party came in sight of the Château of Malesherbes. "Your Majesty," said that veteran courtier the Marquis la Varenne, pointing to the mansion, "could not make a better choice. Yonder you will find good wine, good cooks, and, better still——" Here the speaker paused and smiled. "Well," queried Henri, "what is better still?" The conclusive reply was—"The prettiest girl in France!" "Quite true," put in the gay Roquelaure; "especially as to the lady—she is simply bewitching." "So young!" added a third courtier. "So witty!" observed a fourth. "And so appreciative of heroic deeds!" resumed the grey-headed carrier of *poulets*. "Quite a phoenix among women is Henriette d'Entragues." "What," said Henri, "the sister of the *fourbe* d'Auvergne, and the daughter of the greater *fourbe* d'Entragues—he who married the mistress of Charles IX., and who has taken part in every treason since '93?" She, too, if I mistake not, has already proved herself worthy of her parentage, and ought to have been sent packing over the borders months ago, with the rest of her family, had certain persons done their duty." "It is the lady you allude to," was the response; "but"—and then the hoary reprobate burst into an eloquent apology for the pretty satirist. He was well seconded by other courtiers; and the scene, evidently preconcerted, ended in Henri's resolving to see the damsel for himself.

The valiant Bourbon found Henriette all, and more than all, that he had been led to expect. Her face, indeed, was not regularly beautiful; but, then, it was singularly expressive, and possessed, besides, a conquering smile, and eyes of living light. Her figure, too, if somewhat meagre, was inexpressibly graceful. And she was so clever, so cultivated, so witty, so various, and so deliciously fresh, that long ere the evening closed Gabrielle was forgotten.

Henri left Malesherbes to return again and again, and still again—not as a king, but in more romantic form. He was naturally fond of perilous adventure, and was, in addition, the most inveterate reader of chivalrous stories in France. So notorious was this habit that the Parisians used to term *Amadis de Gaul* the King's Bible. And, what with his warm temperament and his warm reading, he was, in some respects, quite a Quixote. There was some little calculation, too, behind. Nobody knew better than he did the effect of a little living romance on the dames. Instead, then, of wooing his new love like a monarch, he haunted her under all sorts of disguises. Sometimes he met her as a courier, some-

times as a gipsy or a charcoal-burner, and even at times as the spectral huntsman of Fontainebleau. The last startling shape proved not the least convenient: it saved him from a good deal of impertinent curiosity during his rambles. To his mistress he obtained ready access. The heads of the family shut their eyes to his proceedings. The servants, of course, were willing agents, and Henriette herself met him at least half-way.

The end came in due time. Henri proposed that the beauty should take the place vacated by Gabrielle. She consulted her friends. "Be sure you make good terms," was the family counsel. As to what constituted "good terms," there was, however, some difference of opinion. "Secure a title," enjoined the mother. "An estate and plenty of money," advised the father. "A note-of-hand, that may be turned to better account than either," suggested the wily brother. Each hint was excellent in its way, and Henriette pleased herself and everybody else by adopting them all. This, however, was among themselves.

Before the world the family assumed another tone. So far, they had acted as if completely ignorant of what had been going on. But now that matters had reached a crisis, they opened their eyes very wide, saw everything, and were virtuously indignant. Servants were dismissed, and pages whipped. Strict watch was established over the beauty; and the royal wooer was warned ostentatiously to abandon the pursuit. Then Entragues went swaggering about with all the importance of a gentleman who has a grievance. "The King," said he, "taking base advantage of my absence from home, has attempted to seduce my daughter. But let him beware how he trifles with her innocent affections or my honour. I still wear the sword of my youth, and monarchs are just as vulnerable as their minions." L'Auvergne seconded his worshipful father-in-law in all things. The nymph pined in her tower—when strangers happened to be in the vicinity. And *Je charme tout*? Well, she pinched her maids and studied Amyot more vindictively than ever.

Henri laughed at all this as an excellent jest, and straightway despatched the Count du Lude, a trusty servant, who carried a heavy sword and an elastic conscience, to Malesherbes with a tender epistle. Somehow or other, the messenger was allowed to deliver the letter and receive a reply without opposition. But when he prepared to leave the château, he found himself intercepted by the two gentlemen. They saluted him with unpleasant epithets, several of which, it must be allowed, were not unmerited. Nor had he much difficulty in retorting in kind; for in character his antagonists were as seedy as himself, and the nobles of the Renaissance were quite Homeric in the art of scolding. Then they hustled him, and he hustled them. Finally, the three counts drew swords—and instantly regretted, for the act placed them in an awkward predicament. Du Lude had no wish to come to blows with d'Auvergne, who, though illegitimate, was still the son of a king. And he cared even less to have a tussle with the father of a lady so much in favour with his master. On the other side, neither Entragues nor his son-in-law was at

all anxious to spoil the family game by engaging in a serious affray with a royal confidant. Still, swords were out, and, as this was the good old time, there was no sheathing them again without some loss of blood, or what was of more consequence, reputation. From this dilemma, however, they were speedily released. Henriette dashed shrieking out of one door, and threw her arms round her father. And the Countess dashed shrieking out of another door, and threw her arms round her son. Seeing no further risk of a brawl, du Lude put up his sword, bowed low to the ladies, mounted his horse, and trotted away.

"Hem!" grumbled Henri, stroking his grey moustache when du Lude had told his story, "that's the game, is it? Well, we shall see." And he did see Henriette herself a few hours later. How he saw her on this occasion we are not informed, but we may fairly conclude that it was not in disguise. As to the difficulties in the way, his blood was up, and in that mood he was just the man to sweep away the opposition of the Balzacs like a cobweb. The interview was a curious one. The King went straight to the point, and the lady flitted round and round it. She admitted that she loved him, but made the admission with much modest diffidence. She pleaded all that could be said against the royal proposition, mentioned his divorce then speeding to a successful issue, and hinted *marriage*. "Ventre St. Gris!" cried the royal lover, starting to his feet in astonishment and anger, "what rogue has put that into your head?" A little more, and Henriette saw that she must infallibly lose him. This was not to be thought of, so she threw aside all her maidenly scruples, and propounded the first article of her capitulation—100,000 crowns!

Henri hurried to his great financier. "A hundred thousand crowns!" cried Sully, "where are they to come from?" Thereupon the treasurer proceeded to explain, with excruciating minuteness, how many villages must be taxed to supply the sum in the first instance, and how much real good might be done with it in the second. He did not forget either to enlarge on the consequences of this new folly; but of course to no purpose, for Henri would have the cash. It was soon in the possession of the family, who divided it after a good deal of squabbling and one or two downright quarrels. In a few days more old Entragues astonished all Paris with the extraordinary magnificence of his equipage. But while putting on his finery he did not put off his antique virtue; on the contrary, never before had he been so precise in demeanour or so superbly moral in maxim. The courtiers were vastly amused, for Henri never could keep a secret, and everybody knew perfectly where Entragues had procured the funds.

There were several other articles in the capitulation. Those concerning title and estate were easily dealt with. The last, however, caused some discussion. Henriette declared that she was all the King's in heart and soul; but how, oh, how—she asked—was she to meet the reproaches of honour and conscience? Would not her magnanimous

lover provide her with some small excuse for her weakness?—some little promise of marriage, for instance. Not indeed for use—how could she or hers, mere nobles of the fourth rank, dream of such a thing? But just as a salve for her scruples. The argument was so cleverly put, and so admirably supported by a mixture of tears and tenderness, that Henri could not resist it. So the old Count was called in, and with his aid a promise of marriage—the most singular thing of the kind on record—was concocted. Here is its substance:—

“M. de Entragues nous donnant à compagne sa fille, en cas que dans six mois elle devienne grosse et accouche d’un fils, alors et à l’instant nous la prendrons à femme.”

This precious scribble, in which it is hard to say whether the folly or the knavery of the parties who drew it up predominated most, was submitted to Sully. The latter rated his master as he deserved, and tore the thing to atoms without ceremony. A fac-simile, however, was immediately prepared, which, duly signed by the King and countersigned by two Secretaries of State, was handed over to the lady. And she immediately transferred it to the safe, keeping of her father. It was dated October 1st, 1599.

Henriette was at once recognised as royal mistress. Her father and brother acted as might have been expected. In public they bewailed the family dishonour, and vowed vengeance. “Woe to the King,” cried Entragues in every company, “if he does not satisfy the honour of a gentleman by marrying my daughter!” “And woe to the King,” echoed d’Auvergne, “should he break his royal faith by marrying the Florentine!” In private, however, their conduct was of another kind. For instance, at this very time we find Henri writing a letter to his mistress, in which he entreats her to deliver him from the importunities of her father, who seemed “never to think of anything except to *accrocher* (grab) some new booty.”

Wealth was showered upon Henriette. She received the estate and château of Verneuil, with the title of Marchioness. The courtiers bowed before her to the ground. And the thousands who had suits to push at Court soon discovered that they could employ no more powerful advocate. Nor did any one seek her favour empty-handed; for Henriette had a shrewd appreciation of worldly matters, and was indeed as sordid as the rest of her family. Her splendour far surpassed that of her predecessor, even though the handkerchiefs of the latter were said to have cost 1,200 crowns (about 200*l.*) a-piece. Henri, too, was devoted, and gave her every moment he could spare. He took up his quarters at Nanteuil, near Senlis, some leagues from the residence of the Marchioness. His visits were mostly made in the evening, and as this was the season of short days, a light placed high over the tower of Nanteuil, and another placed equally high at Verneuil, guided him to and fro. And if it chanced that circumstances carried him for a period beyond the circle of her attractions, he kept his courtiers busy bearing consolatory epistles.

Early in December, 1599, Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, accompanied by a strange medley of priests, harlots, councillors, and portable magnificence, and escorted by 1,200 splendid cuirassiers, paid a visit to Paris. This prince was the firebrand of his age. In him nearly all the talents and as many vices were united. He was scholar, diplomatist, orator, soldier and—perfidy personified. This amiable sovereign had serious business to transact in Paris. During the troubles of the League he had appropriated sundry broad patches of French territory, of which Henri IV. had determined to resume possession. To prevent this was one object of the Savoyard. And another—perhaps even dearer to his heart—was the rupture of the negotiation which promised shortly to make a Tuscan princess queen of France. For ever since the elevation of the Medici to sovereign rank, the Counts of Savoy had hated them as upstarts and rivals. They had felt the marriage of Catherine de' Medici as "a heavy blow and great discouragement." And Charles Emmanuel was determined to avert another such stroke by any means and at any cost—if the thing were only possible. He had not far to seek. The factions that had so long desolated France, though subdued and scattered, were still very capable of mischief, and the Savoyard proceeded to reorganise them. In this occupation he was ably seconded by the Spanish ambassador, a man who, like all his compatriots, was the deadly foe of France. And between the two a formidable conspiracy was soon afoot.

Of this conspiracy the Marchioness of Verneuil was the pivot. The Savoyard had read her at a glance and rejoiced in her dangerous qualities, which he manipulated with masterly skill. He declared that she deserved to be a queen. He roused her jealousy against the prospective bride of Henri. He pronounced the contract of marriage a good one. He vowed to maintain it with his sword. And every word he spoke the Spanish ambassador repeated in the name of his master. Henriette's head was turned. Thenceforward she dreamt of nothing but a crown, and was ready for any work likely to place it on her head. Her father and brother were hardly so sanguine. They would have rejoiced to have seen her on the throne, but they were far too practical to deceive themselves with any such fantasy. Meanwhile, they made the most of the circumstances. And since the contract was thus cried up by such men as the Italian prince and the Spanish envoy, they rang the changes on that cry with skill and effect.

Charles Emmanuel would fain have prolonged the negotiations—chiefly with a view to the perfection of his plot. Henri had no suspicion of what was brewing, but he was not the less resolved to get rid of his dangerous visitor without delay. The method he took was characteristic of the period. He had it whispered that he meant to seize the Savoyard and shut him up in one of his strongholds. Such deeds were not uncommon, as Charles Emmanuel well knew. Judging Henri by himself, he took the alarm, and hastened away by forced marches, never breathing

freely until he was safe over the French border. Henri laughed and followed on his track with an army. The campaign that ensued threatened to be perilous for both. For the first time in his life the Savoyard was unready. But then Henri had a traitor, Marshal Biron, in high command, and behind him the disgusted Huguenots, the discomfited Leaguers, and the ambitious seigneurs under such formidable leaders as Bouillon, Epemon, and the princes of Lorraine were prepared to rise in arms at the proper time. That opportunity, however, never came. Biron, blundering at the outset in his new part of traitor, was immediately hedged about with precautions that kept him faithful in spite of himself, while his sovereign carried all before him.

Previous to departing for the war Henri directed his ministers to hasten the negotiations with Florence. The chief of them, Sully, who longed to see his master "well married," required little pressing, and the terms were soon arranged. When the last signature was attached to the last document, Sully warned Vinta, the Tuscan representative, to keep the matter secret. "For," said the former, "should that madcap Verneuil happen to find it out, there is no knowing what might happen."

The object of Sully's apprehensions, who by this time appeared in a fair way to keep her portion of the contract, accompanied the King on his way to the war as far as Lyons. There they parted with much tenderness, Henri making a good many promises which he had no intention of keeping; and there Henriette elected to remain until the close of the fighting. There, too, she was delighted with the gift of several standards captured in an early encounter. The present, however, did not mean much. Henri was in the habit of lavishing military trophies, as well as riches and titles, on his mistresses. And not at all unnecessarily; for Verneuil herself, who in this instance may be considered as speaking for all her sister-sultanas, was accustomed to tell him that there would have been no bearing him had he not been a king and a hero.

What Henriette meant to do at Lyons is uncertain. Perhaps she desired to take advantage of the earliest intelligence of Henri's death, which had been carefully planned. But while she waited, an event occurred that forbade her to hope much from the conspiracy. Over her residence burst a thunderstorm whose flash and rattle terrified her into a premature accouchement, and her baby, a boy, too, was—alas for her!—still-born. Nor was this the worst. While she was still prostrated by illness and disappointment, the embassy that was to conduct the new bride to France, traversed the town on its way to Italy. In spite of her character, we cannot help pitying the mistress at this period. And could we forget that character, we would accord unqualified admiration to the course she adopted. Conquering her anguish of body and mind, she flung herself into a litter, and was transported over the rough Alpine roads to the seat of war. In any other case the journey

would have been one of toil, hardship, and peril; in hers it was simply terrible.

The monarch was much embarrassed. He was eager for the Florentine alliance, from which he anticipated much domestic happiness and many public advantages, and—he meant to keep his brilliant mistress too! At any other moment he would have used little ceremony with the woman beside him. Harsh word and harsher deed would soon have reduced her to the proper state of mind of a royal plaything—that is, abject submission. But here he felt that the plain truth, told in his usual very plain way, would have been dangerous to one or both. It might destroy Henriette—a result that would go far towards ruining the reputation for magnanimity that he had been at such pains to establish; and, failing in that, it would certainly drive her into a course that could not but interfere seriously with his political interests, and, what he valued just as much, his private enjoyment. But such dilemmas were not unfrequent with the gay Henri, and he escaped from this one as from many another, by a method not creditable to him either as a man or a monarch. Henri caressed and flattered and deceived, and Henriette became a willing dupe.

The piece of acting that followed would have done credit to Fouché. Documents were immediately drawn up disavowing the recent proceedings of the French minister in Italy, and instructing them to break off the Tuscan marriage. And the better to deceive Henriette, these documents were entrusted for transmission to an agent of her own, her travelling companion and secretary, the Capuchin Travail.

When the mistress left the camp on one side for Paris, the man departed on the other for Rome. Both were in high spirits, for the one was confident of achieving a crown, and the other just as confident of winning a cardinal's hat, or at the very least a mitre. Had the mistress been a little more experienced, or the monk something wiser, they would hardly have been so sanguine; for neither the messenger, nor the missives he carried, were like to be much respected—that is, should they reach their destination. But this the cunning monarch took care should not happen; for while the Marchioness journeyed by easy stages to Verneuil, improving marvellously as she went, the monk fell into the hands of a party posted to intercept him, and was detained in close custody so long as it suited the monarch's purpose. To complete the unkingliness of the proceeding, Henri was well aware that on the very day he acted thus, his proxy, the magnificent Bellegarde, was standing at the altar with Marie de' Medici.

The Marchioness was not long allowed to enjoy her fool's paradise. Hardly had she reached her snug château, than news was brought that Marie de' Medici had landed in France and was on her way to meet the King at Lyons. History has not told how the intelligence was received, nor was it necessary.

The King was anything rather than satisfied with his new bride. Previous to this meeting he had formed a very favourable opinion of her

person. But the portrait submitted to his inspection had been painted ten years before, when Marie was but seventeen, and she had greatly altered in the interval. She disappointed him precisely as Anne of Cleves disappointed Henry VIII. And the Bourbon vented his annoyance in much the same terms as the Tudor. Further, like all vain and selfish men, Henri was exceedingly jealous. And Marie, besides displaying a very palpable liking for Bellegarde, carried in her train no less than three specimens of a creature then beginning to multiply in Italy—the *cavalier servente*. And finally she was in qualities all that Henri disliked—that is, bigoted, dull, obstinate, and bad-tempered. But if Henri was little pleased with the Queen, she was no better satisfied with him. For, in addition to his shortcomings in point of person and morals, Marie considered him as little, if at all, better than that abomination—a heretic.

Immediately after the arrival of Marie she was introduced to the mistress, and by the King. The Louvre not being ready yet to receive Marie, she made the house of the Florentine Gondi her temporary residence. There, one evening when she was at supper, and the house crowded with high-born visitors, a very noble dame—Madame de Nemours—appeared leading the Verneuil. The company stared in silent astonishment, which became something more when Henri, stepping forward, took Henriette by the hand and presented her to Marie with the following words:—"Madame, this lady has been my mistress, and desires to be your very humble servant." The Queen's eyes flashed, and her lips trembled, but she said not a word. Henriette then took her robe to kiss it, putting about as little respect into the action as she could, hardly inclining her head, and taking the drapery somewhere near the waist. "Lower, madam, lower!" commanded Henri, and suiting the action to the word, he pressed the shoulder of the mistress heavily down until he bent her to her knee, and then he guided her fingers to the very hem of the Queen's garment. Great was the speculation on this singular scene. It was, however, as nothing to the speculation that followed. For when the Queen removed to the Louvre she was accompanied thither by Henriette! Such a delicate-minded monarch was Henri the Great.

Between the dames Henri had little peace. "Here I am," said he one day to Sully, "ready to abandon my follies and lead a respectable life, if my wife would only permit me. But she won't. Always snarling, nagging, and brawling, she absolutely drives me out of my own home, and nearly out of my wits. I know the character of the Marchioness as well as you can tell me. I know that she is mercenary, deceitful, and dangerous. But then she is so clever, so witty, so tasteful, so entertaining, so everything that Marie is not! I say," he broke off, "cannot you do something to quiet the termagant? She trusts you and respects you more than any man in France. You, if anybody, can influence her. Try, there's a good fellow." Sully did try, and repeatedly. But even his skill could not effect the desired reconciliation; and at length he gave up the task with something like disgust.

It was well known that Henriette and her family had been deeply implicated in Biron's plot. Indeed, its drift had been to set up herself and her son as queen and dauphin in opposition to "the cow and her calf," as the conspirators, borrowing the sentence from the Marchioness, irreverently termed Marie and her boy. Henriette's connection with the King, however, shielded herself and her father from inquiry; and in connection with his descent from the Valois, it shielded d'Auvergne from the worst result of his treason. He escaped with a short confinement in the Bastile, while the hardly more guilty marshal was led to the block. But a charge more damaging than treason was shortly afterwards preferred against the Marchioness, and though it was neither sharply pressed nor closely searched into, it struck a blow from which her influence never recovered.

Among the gay gallants of that superlatively gay court, the gayest and most gallant were two princes of the House of Guise. That house, by the way, as it then was, compared with what it had been, affords a strong argument in favour of a theory recently propounded. The first three generations of the Guises had been German of the grandest type. But all at once the family became completely French in blood and brain. The sons of the Victim of Blois, as scandal delighted to explain, resembled in all respects the minions of Henri III.; and so did the sons of his brothers. St. Megrin and Bussi d'Amboise, indeed, seemed to live again in the Prince de Joinville and his cousin, the Count de Somme-rive. As daring as the minions, these princes did not hesitate to rival the King himself. It is only with Joinville that we have to do at present. Henri was not permitted to remain long ignorant of the flirtation. He remonstrated with his mistress. "Pooh!" said she, laughing, "you are getting old and jealous; there will soon be no living with you." So the matter passed off for that time. But the affair grew warmer, and Henri remonstrated again, to be replied to by the indignant tears of the haughty and outraged woman that the Marchioness delighted to bethought. Henri was silenced, but far from satisfied. Next time he resorted to Sully. "Frighten her," said he. "Tell her that I mean to shut her up in a convent and take another mistress." Sully shook his head and obeyed. With the minister Henriette adopted other airs and arts. She spoke disrespectfully of Henri and declared that she was resolved to break off all connection with him. She even besought Sully to aid her. He, nothing loth, agreed, and for weeks the question of her marriage or retirement to a convent occupied his leisure. He had cause to regret his facility, for the wily woman ended by accusing him of malicious meddling and disavowing all his proceedings. Still the flirtation went on. Joinville, however, was fickle, and a new face, that of the beautiful Madame de Villars-Brancas, won him from the Marchioness. Nor was this the first rivalry that had taken place between the aunt and the niece, for thus closely allied were the dames. Henriette had carried off the King from her aunt; and now Madame de Villars was delighted

with her success in winning the fascinating prince from her dutiful niece. But in those days such a triumph was little valued unless the victorious dame could display the accustomed trophies—the love-letters of the deserted beauty. These the lover was always expected to surrender, and Joinville surrendered them accordingly. Now, Madame de Villars, being the rival of the Marchioness, was therefore the staunch partisan of the Queen. The letters consequently were carried to the Louvre, where they were first duly laughed at, and then placed carefully in the hands of Henri. He burst into a mighty fit of rage, summoned his privy councillors, stormed and fumed, talked racks, wheels, and blocks to any extent, and then flew off “to have it out” with the faithless she. Before he reached her residence, however, he cooled down enough to see that he was making himself supremely ridiculous. So he returned to the palace, and sent as usual for Sully. The latter detested the mistress most heartily. But he was a statesman, above all things, and he saw that it would not do to alienate the powerful family of the Guises for a matter like this. So he recommended a little wholesome delay. In conformity with Sully’s advice, the Marchioness was apprised of her offence, and appointed a day whereon to justify herself, if she could. Meanwhile, Sully communicated quietly with the heads of the House of Guise. When the day came, all the parties concerned met in the hotel of the Marchioness. There Joinville’s brother, the Duke d’Aguillon, produced a clerk, who swore that he had forged the letters displayed by Madame de Villars; and Joinville admitted that he had employed the clerk, urging in excuse the detestable maxim, “All is fair in love.” Henri affecting to believe, the Marchioness was pronounced innocent, and the prince handed over to his family for punishment. Having sacrificed to policy, Henri proceeded to take his revenge, or at least as much as remained in his power. He led the Marchioness into another room, and closed the door behind them. There for an hour or more his voice was heard rising higher and higher in fierce reproach, while Henriette replied only with her tears. The King then returned to the palace, where he began to make vigorous love to one of Marie’s attendants. As for Joinville, he was sent to travel, nor did he reappear in France until the death of the monarch.

Shortly after the affair with Joinville, the King fell dangerously ill. Henriette was greatly alarmed, for she knew that, should Henri die, her vindictive rival would become all-powerful. Impressed with a well-founded dread of the consequences, she threw off her insolence, and sued humbly to be permitted to take measures for the safety of herself and her children. Henri acquiesced, and d’Auvergne was commissioned, by virtue of a royal warrant, to negotiate with the Spaniards, in order to secure his sister a shelter in Flanders. At the same time, d’Auvergne undertook, with his usual craftiness, to practise a little quiet espionage over the Spaniards, and Henri did not object. The family made just that use of the license that might have been expected. Under its excellent cover, they set to work very busily, and not unsuccessfully, to reorganise the ancient

plot. As before, the Marchioness and her son were to be recognised as queen and dauphin; as before, the nobles were to canton themselves in the provinces, after the manner of the great barons of the Middle Ages; and, as before, the Spaniard and the Savoyard were to aid rebellion with all their force.

Marie, as well as Henriette, calculated on the King's decease. She looked forward to it as the hour of triumph and revenge. And, designing that the haughty mistress should be thoroughly disabled at its arrival, she demanded the surrender of the promise of marriage. Hitherto, Henri seems to have remembered the thing with contempt, if he thought of it at all; but Marie gave him no peace until he consented to reclaim it. The demand came at an awkward moment for the Balzacs. To resign it was to abandon their one great advantage; and to withhold it would be to excite those suspicions that might penetrate their secret at any moment. By d'Auvergne's advice, a forgery was skilfully executed and handed to the King, who detected the cheat in a twinkling, and became all the more resolute to obtain the genuine document. D'Auvergne's resources were exhausted; but the father and daughter held out a little longer. At length, for a bribe of 20,000 crowns in hand, and the promise, which was never fulfilled, of a marshal's bâton, old Entragues resigned the paper. It was found in an iron box, among the roots of an old oak in the park of Marcousi, two princes of the blood and five leading ministers looking on, and afterwards signing a declaration that it was the right one.

While this business was going forward, d'Auvergne effected an adroit escape from the court. He quarrelled with the Count of Soissons and challenged him. And in return for his audacity—for Soissons was a legitimate prince and therefore far his superior—the challenger was exiled to his estates in Auvergne. He was then at full liberty to perfect the plot unwatched. But there his career soon came to a close. Henri recalled the Jesuits and took one of the fraternity as confessor; and immediately afterwards an intercepted letter revealed the conspiracy. The coincidence is remarkable. D'Auvergne took to the hills of central France, where he spent some romantic weeks, comforted by a romantic lady, from whose arms he was snatched in a romantic way. He was lodged in the Bastille, whither his father-in-law had preceded him. As for the Marchioness, she was placed under strict supervision in her hotel, where the search that ensued brought to light many letters at least as warm as those written to Joinville. A few obscure intriguers were also arrested. No serious notice, however, was taken of other great conspirators.

The Balzacs were brought to trial, though not without much hesitation on the part of Henri, and several unusually stormy meetings with his mistress. All through the trial the parties maintained their respective characters. D'Auvergne proved himself the *superfin* scoundrel that Sully had already pronounced him. Producing the royal warrant, he argued with much ingenuity that the King was the prime mover of the plot—if

plot there had been. Entragues was delighted with such a glorious opportunity of exhibiting himself to all the world in his double character of indignant father and pattern of antique virtue. And the defence of the Marchioness was as cunning, violent, and satirical as the woman herself. Their speeches would have been admirable had not the speakers contradicted every word a thousand times over by their previous words and actions. For instance, the Marchioness declared that neither torture nor punishment should degrade her so low as to accept the disgraceful title of mistress. And yet, not six months before, she had penned a letter—which is yet extant—wherein she gloried in the fact that she had “once been called mistress by the greatest monarch on earth!”

Having made their separate defences the parties were confronted. The result was a triangular duel—father, daughter, and brother falling foul of one another and exchanging invectives without stint. When everybody was tried, Henriette put on the tragedy-queen, and turning to the judges exclaimed, “I demand mercy for my father, a rope for my brother, and justice for myself!” Thus the trial ended.

In the ensuing February sentence was pronounced—the Marchioness being condemned to seclusion for life in a convent, whither she was led at once, and the two Counts to be decapitated. Of course none of the sentences were intended to be executed. D’Auvergne indeed remained in the Bastille for the next twelve years; but the Marchioness and her father soon received a full pardon.

Thenceforward Henriette sank down to the level of an abandoned mistress. For the sake of her children Henri accorded her a certain standing, and even visited her from time to time. He tolerated her father too, nor did he refuse to exchange occasional repartees with him. One day the stoic came to court to *accrocher* an order on the treasury. Henri granted it without much demur. “And now,” said he, referring to the conspiracy, “did you really mean to kill me?” “Yes, sire,” was the unabashed reply; “and never shall the intention quit my breast until your Majesty shall repair the wrong you have done my honour.”

During the King’s mad passion for the Princess of Condé, Henriette made her peace with the Queen. The circumstance is suspicious: and there are others tending to prove that she had a share in the assassination of Henri. After that event she lived retired, dividing her time pretty equally between devotion and the pleasures of the table. As a devotee she founded a convent, and in her character of gourmand she managed to become a very mountain of flesh. She died in February, 1633.

Iphition.

Ἐν δ' Ἀχιλεὺς Τρῶεσσι θόρε, . . .
 σμερδαλέα ἰδχων πρῶτον δ' ἔλεν Ἰφίτιωνα
 τὸν δ' ἰδὼς μεμῶτα βῆλ' ἔγχεϊ διὸς Ἀχιλλεύς,
 μέσσην καὶ κεφαλὴν.—*Iliad*, xx. 381, κ.τ.λ.

How, facing an unconquerable foe,
 Silent and firm in the lost battle's roar,
 Iphition fell, three thousand years ago,
 We learn ;—let him have praise for evermore.

What ! though his slayer, drunk with Eastern blood,
 Be borne aloft on wider wings of fame,
 Two words, by Homer dropped in careless mood,
 Give light enough to read a hero's name.

The shout that shattered armies into flight,
 The godlike form in heaven's own armour clad,
 The golden plumes divine that lived with light
 At every step, for him no terrors had.

Right on he rushed, though to a certain doom,
 Hephestian mail and matchless strength defied ;
 And, carrying with him proudly to the tomb
 The whiteness of his honour, so he died.

There Homer leaves him, like a tall ship wrecked—
 Leaves him to wolves and vultures where he lay ;
 But that which makes the man, no bard's neglect
 To beast, or bird, or Time can yield a prey.

Thus ever, through eternity, we dream
That he by looking back is comforted,
That the long sunless hours of Hades gleam,
With radiance from the past around him shed ;

That inward still he murmurs, as the wind
Murmurs through roofless halls : "At least I know
None find a spot on my young life behind,
Nor dread I here what all must undergo.

"Death cometh—ay ! but after death to say
What I with truth *can* say is given to few.
Achilles, thine the fame—yet well I may
Believe myself the better of the two.

"Armed by no god, but as my fellow-men,
I faltered not in fight, though others fled,
Till my safe conqueror struck me down, and then
Against his lance, the blood leapt warm and red.

"And even here, on this unhoping coast,
With spirit unexhausted I can bow
To what Fate sends ; Achilles, as a ghost,
Whines, weak without his god-given armour now.

"Though all life lent my soul no longer aid ;
The memory that I never quailed, for me
Keeps vital warmth within. I scorn the shade
That, to touch earth again, a slave would be." *

FRANCIS H. DOYLE.

* *Odyssey*, b. xi. 488-90.

Amongst the Heather.

Nor the least breath of wind stirs the heavy masses of yellow calceolarias on the lawn, or finds its way through the open study window. A glance at the topmost twigs of the acacia, sensitive as they ordinarily are to the slightest curl of air, shows each pinnate leaf sharply brought out against a lowering sky. A thunderstorm is clearly impending, and we fall to thinking which book Elia, in his mild wisdom, would have recommended as the fitting one for such an afternoon. "Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him;" ere long Nature's grandest diapason will be rolling overhead, while the lightning plays in and out from the canopy of cloud over the distant Welsh hills. All at once, as we open the book, a page of *Paradise Lost* discloses a sprig of heather. It is well preserved, owing to the plant's coriaceous nature, though the deep native purples are fled, being replaced by pale lilac. Satirical poets may smile at the speedy forgetfulness of the donor's name which ensues when such a sprig is given as a *gage d'amour*. Personal recollections soon fade from a dried flower, but local associations almost always assert themselves. The smell of a flower or tree in its living state is the principal spell which recalls distant places to the memory, as any one may prove experimentally for himself. The fragrance of yew-trees or furze bushes is thus particularly potent. The musty odour of death, however, confounds all these delicate scents, and it is the sight of withered petal or dried leaf-stalk which now plays the magician to the mind. In this case remembrance flies back to Wallace's Hill in Selkirkshire, which overlooks the fair windings of the Tweed until the mighty russet shoulders of Minch Moor close the view. It brings back an autumnal Sunday morning and an idle ramble with a friend over the heathery slopes until, sitting down by a Pictish fort and gazing into the misty glens under Dollar Law and Broad Law, and then up at the brotherhood of envious hills which shut out the prospect from the Yarrow Valley, the home of love and poetry, in an absent mood this sprig of heather was plucked and carried so far homeward that it seemed but kindly to preserve it between these leaves, just as men grant a comfortable old age to a favourite horse. And now this little dry twig marvellously reproduces that morning's sights and sounds—the stagshorn moss winding amongst the heather-tufts, with its delicate, amber-coloured spikes of fructification; the whirr of the blackcock crossing a glen; the rush of a startled blue hare; the red mutch of the old woman walking on the hill-path to Traquair Kirk; the distant peep at the massive walls

of Traquair House, the last refuge of loyalty to the Stuarts, where Charles Edward's cradle is reverentially preserved, and the front gates of the mansion may yet be seen overgrown with several inches of turf, never having been opened since its gallant owners rode through them to join the White Rose in 1745. Nay, the subjects—even the very tones of the conversation once more awake to life, like the frozen notes in the fairy tale, and all this, thanks to the suggestiveness of a little dried sprig of heather.

It is matter of wonder why the thistle, with its defiant motto, has been adopted as the emblem of Scotland rather than the heather, which so regally mantles its hills. The rigid angularities of the national character live, indeed, in one; but the tender grace, the breadth of colour, the fragility and yet the endurance of the heather, point to the higher and finer aspects of the Scotch nature, and the deep affection and strength of will which underlie it. The fact seems to be that until the Union the aggressive, prickly nature of the thistle only too aptly symbolized the rough and warlike disposition of Scotland. Few sentiments save patriotism found favour with its people before the middle of the eighteenth century. They took no thought of poetry or the refinements of life when the sword was at their throats and their ears rang with denunciations of Stuart or Hanoverian. When this question was definitely settled, and commerce took her place in peace upon her throne, border feud and national animosity alike faded into the emotional love of country and home, which finds its expression in so many beautiful ballads and songs, the slogan being exchanged for those pathetic love-songs which are the glory of Scotch literature. Then heather was twisted in many a chaplet of song. Thus Thomas the Rhymer speaks of

Flodden's high and heathery side.?

And the ballad of "King Henrie" runs—

Oh, pu'd has he the green heather,
And made to her a bed;

while it serves to heighten the pathos of "Faithless Donald"—

When first ye climbed the heath'ry steep
Wi' me to keep my father's sheep,
The vows ye made ye said ye'd keep!

The "brown heath" was Scott's favourite plant, and naturally occurs again and again in the Ettrick Shepherd's songs, perhaps never more beautifully than in his exquisite poem to the Skylark—

Then when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather brooms,
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!

In prose no one has emphasised its cheerful appearance and fitness to the localities it chooses better than Mr. Ruskin, and certainly no one ever

drew it with exacter delineation of every curve and grace. When roaming over a highland corrie, however, or marking the sunlight fall on the granite blocks of Dartmoor, all but swallowed, as they are in summer, by the purple ocean of heather that surges in upon their desolation, the traveller is apt to forget that there are more than one species of heather in the kingdom. There are seven (or, omitting *Calluna*, six) even in England, while the whole family boasts some 400 species, to say nothing of the innumerable hybrids and varieties which our gardens produce. Every one knows the common ling or heather (*Calluna*), which is the most widely distributed of the family, ranging, as it does, from Labrador to the Azores, and spreading all along the western coast of Europe from the Atlantic-washed side of Africa, which is the original home of the race. The Scotch heather proper (*Erica cinerea*) is somewhat thicker and taller than this last, with reddish-purple flowers which delight bees, while its tender shoots are dear to the grouse and blackcock. The cross-leaved heath (*E. tetralix*) once seen is never forgotten. Fairies might have modelled it in wax, as, rising four or five inches from the ground, it hangs its delicately-tinted, rose-flushed flowers over some boggy spot where the cotton-grass flutters in the wind and the plover whistles against the bleating snipe, hence known in Scotland as the "heather-bleat." Whoever has penetrated to the angry coast of the Lizard, either to see its curious churches or to gather its characteristic plants, must have recognised the Cornish heath (*E. vagans*) as soon as he set foot upon the magnesian limestone, while the ciliated heath occurs in isolated spots in the Cornish peninsula, and Mackay's and the Mediterranean heath are only to be found in the south-western districts of Ireland, being in truth outliers from the flora of the Spanish peninsula on the Continent. All these heaths are fond of lonely, wind-smitten localities, tenderly flinging their red and purple jewels over Nature's desolations, and as the long summer days die out, rustling their sere and withered flowers (which remain on the plant even when dead, and form the chief characteristic of the family in a botanist's eyes) amongst snow and wet, determined to do their best to cheer the waste places of the earth. The autumnal holiday-maker never fails to greet the heath as the symbol of all that is free and pleasurable in outdoor life, while to the inmates of the Scotch shieling heather stands in much the same relation for its economic uses as does the bamboo to the Gond or Malay. Even the gipsy and the tramp have reason to bless heather, as it helps them to a livelihood by making brooms, if only they can obtain, or take, right of common where it grows. And to many a mountain child the purple hillside is the only flower garden he knows; but what a garden! reaching from horizon to horizon, itself the best of bedding-plants, requiring no care or expenditure, the greener after the worst of storms, when August's sun blazes most fiercely only more purple and luxuriant, the home of all that is elevated and purifying in heart and taste. For "it is not the written poetry which affects us most, but the unwritten poetry of our own youth, and mine is

all bound up with heather, and fern, and streams flowing under the shade of alders." *

Not only are there many different species of heather, but, despite the apparent uniformity of the common kinds when covering a moorland, the keen eye may discover differences in the texture and colour of the flowery carpet, which the dull wight, his vision unpurged by euphrasy and rue, thoughtlessly misses. Mark this grey scaur falling eighty feet from the pure blue skies overhead into the blackest pool of the Tummel, but fringed above with the deepest of purple heather, which lovingly runs as far down its face as the longest spray can find foothold. No wonder that an artist is painting the scene from his umbrella-tent behind us, and no wonder that time after time he halts disgusted, no cunning of eye and hand sufficing to catch those living, glowing tints suffused with sunlight over the birch-trees, and dropping like a flower-fall (to coin a word for the nonce) into breezy space. Who has ever yet seen heather adequately painted? Miss Mutrie at present, Van Huysum in old days, would exactly limn a sprig of it; but it is a very different thing to cope with a whole surface of glowing heather, with all its reflected lights, manifold depths, and fainter shadows, and trembling twinklings of rose-red passing into the grand sunlit fulness of purple perfection. From this living sheet of amethyst turn we the mental kaleidoscope to South Devon, where the heather-clad hills rise, say, from the Otter Valley towards the west. The prospect has lost the prevailing charm of purple monotone, but it has gained in richness as compensation. Yellow bog-asphodel spikes and creamy white bedstraw, pink, white and blue milkwort, foxgloves and mullein with woolly leaves and yellow flowers, and many more contrasts of colour, like Proserpine's stores hurriedly emptied upon Enna, crowd every square yard of the stony moorland, while dwarf furze, ablaze with living gold, throws into prominence the red breadths of heather. Flora's richest gifts in July cover these bare hillsides, topped here and there with dark pines, while blinding gleams of blue sea to the left and in front enhance the effect. It is very beautiful in its own way, but the soberness of Northern heather is lost in the general glow. This might be a lotus-eater's Paradise; here there is room for imagination, for peaceful rest from work, and golden dreams. In Scotland, with foot on the heather, red as with the life-blood of its sturdy rocks, and running up their shoulders till stopped by the snow-wreaths which, even in summer, linger on the highest corries, the heart beats quicker and gathers strength for deeds. So Devon has her worthies who, as old Prince tells us, have sung, and painted, and roved the seas in quest of adventures. Scotland's sons have left their bones in every clime, and everywhere stamped the impress of their stern patriotism and unbending perseverance. Devon has been the nursery of knights-errant—Scotland the stern mother of heroes.

Hant's heather, again, as seen on the North Downs, is uniformly of a

* P. G. Hamerton, *Round My House*, p. 54.

soberer tint than that of either Devon or Scotland. There is little admixture of other flowers, nothing to serve as foil to its amethystine glow. We look up to the man who is inflexibly virtuous, and respect him who is unswervingly accurate in his disposition of time; but love seldom gathers round them, because kindly inconsistencies and the amiable failings so dear to ordinary human natures are unknown to them. So the heart finds it difficult to attach itself to the unalloyed heather of Hants. It is different with Lincolnshire, where scanty patches of the plant occasionally linger, pleasing oases to the artistic eye amongst the vast desert of skilled farming, the formal acres of turnips and mangolds threatening ere long to swallow up these purple outliers, which indeed are at present only permitted to exist on sufferance. The very rarity of these scattered banks of heather renders them precious. The beholder blesses them (if he be not a farmer), on account of their associations with Northern sport and beauty, freedom from cares, and a thousand other sentiments which break in acceptably on the anxieties felt all round him upon short-horns, labourers' unions, and foot-and-mouth disease. In Yorkshire the moors, with their beathery covering, are the next best thing to Scotland; are Scotland, in short, without its glamour and romance. When the brown streamlet under the hills on which we walk is seized at the end of the valley, five miles off, and turned into a vast tank, built by some company, to supply Manchester or Leeds with water, and the whitewashed walls of some hideous factory catch the sight on the acclivity beyond, sensitive natures feel that they have not yet got far enough north. The heather is the same, but its associations are infinitely poorer; and, after all, association is a more powerful agent than mere beauty:—

Oh, the wafts o' heather-honey, and the music o' the brae,
As I watch the great harts feeding nearer, nearer a' the day;
Oh, to hark the eagle screaming, sweeping, ringing round the sky,
That's a bonnier life,—

the outlaw may well say, than listening to the rattle of a thousand spindles, and living in a mile-long village, where every house is the counterpart of its neighbour.

The growth of this modern passion for Scotch scenery has been analysed by Lord Macaulay, in a well-known passage. It is little more than a century since Johnson penetrated to the Hebrides, and came back to Fleet Street with as much fame as a man now obtains after visiting the sources of the Nile. Gray, the poet, seems to have been amongst the first to discover the romantic beauties of Scotland. In the Lake district, too, he forestalled the encomiums of Wordsworth and his school. Moderns, who leave their club one day and tread the heather of Culloden on the next, little think what a business such a jaunt was considered even at the beginning of this century. Sportsmen who then took the journey carried multifarious supplies with them, and made arrange-

ments for their stay resembling those which are made at present for a shooting trip to Arkansas and the Rocky Mountains. An amusing instance may be found in Colonel Thornton's Scotch expedition, which probably took place in 1784 or 1785; though, curiously enough, in his stately quarto, published in 1804, he nowhere states the exact year in which it was made. The mere recital of his preparations fills pages. Besides horses, dogs, guns, and fishing-rods, with all manner of tackle and ammunition, he took a gig and two baggage-waggons, complete camp equipage, two boats (for the lakes), and even an artist! All were packed on board a sloop engaged for the purpose, and very racy are his exploits by river-side and on the heather. With the memory of Mr. Milbank's famous bag of 728 grouse on Wemmergill Moors, August 20, 1872, in our minds, the following passage, concerning the gallant Colonel's achievements amongst the heather, is sufficiently amusing to the present generation:—

"I had had some suspicions that my famous treble battle-powder had received damage from a leak in the *Falcon* sloop, and this day's shooting fully convinced me of it. I never knew powder hang so much, and always firing dull; but there was no remedy. With good powder, I verily believe I could have killed thirty brace presently;" and then he takes the trouble to add, "Pero, Ponto, Dargo, Shandy, Carlo, and Romp, all whelps, behaved incomparably."*

Most enthusiastic of all sportsmen, however, when clad in his shooting-jacket and his feet on his native heather, is Christopher North. Who does not know his athletic frame, as he appears in Duncan's picture, leaning on his gun, his hat flung on the bank at his side, and his grand massive head and neck, such as Ajax might have envied, thrown back, as he sniffs the fresh moorland breeze, and, with kindling eye, breaks out into those eloquent rhapsodies wherewith he was wont to charm the last generation? What proud exultation for every gallant deed done of old on Scotch ground, and for all the rugged ballads that tell of them, now fires his heart! Again, what keen delight in all the sports to which those heather-clad hills invite impels him to burst into ecstasies of excited yet wonderful description! We pant after him in vain, as he breasts the corrie, intent on reaching the deer unsuspectingly feeding behind the mountain's shoulder; now he leaves us far behind, as he stalks up the brae, "like a king rejoicing in his strength," while we, weakly mortals, painfully clamber below him, to shoot the ptarmigan on its summit; and again he reclines on the heather, mingling philosophic disquisition with recitations from Homer and Burns; next moment to be rushing downwards to join a coursing party, with which he hallooes the dogs on to some luckless "maukin," and keeps pace with the fleetest of her pursuers, till she "carries away her cocked fud unscathed for the third time; nor can there any longer

* Thornton's *Sporting Tour*, p. 151. London: 1804.

be the smallest doubt in the world in the minds of the most sceptical, that she is—what all the country-side have long known her to be—a witch." But the activities of this true son of the heather are not half exhausted. See him bird-nesting, salmon-fishing, "bickering" with snowballs, fighting Jack the Tinker, shooting wild ducks in the moonlight, when December's frost holds earth and water in the hardest fetters, dog-fighting with gipsies after Falkirk Tryst—had ever any one more intense delight in thews and sinews, and the mere animal joys of living? Sit down now on this heather cushion, with the graceful birches waving above, and look down on beautiful Loch Tummel, while the enchanter tells of village love and the sanctities of cottage life in the Highlands, and draws out the severe yet simple sentiments of piety which bring together the minister's scattered flock every Sabbath, from distant shielings and shepherds' huts, seldom visited save by the autumnal sportsman, and you recognise the tender, almost feminine undercurrent of feeling in the Professor's heart, and own that he can skilfully touch the deepest chords of the music of humanity. Now that political hatreds and insensate party spirit have so greatly moderated their intensity, the man emerges all the brighter from the clouds of partizanship. Long may Scotland be proud of one of her warmest-hearted sons!

Besides poetry and eloquence, the sister art of painting has caught marvellous inspiration in these later days of nature-study from the heather which past generations looked on with contempt, as signifying the nakedness of the land, and shutting them out from the acquisition of gold. Turning to Shakespeare as a guide to men's thoughts in the Elizabethan age, Gonzales can only think of heath as the last straw a drowning man would catch at. It is something more worthless than even Virgil's sea-weed—*vilior projecta alga*: "Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze, anything! The wills above be done, but I would fain die a dry death!" To heighten the horrors which spring from their prophetic announcement, it is on the "blasted heath" near Forres that the Witches meet Macbeth and Banquo, while the Clown in *All's Well that Ends Well* (III. 2) infinitely prefers even old heather anywhere save in the country; "our old ling and our Isbel's o' the country are nothing like your old ling and your Isbels o' the court." How different is popular sentiment at present when crowds rush to the Academy in the height of the season to see a few square feet of Scotch landscape and red heather painted by Millais or Graham! Landseer with his Highland views, and Ansdell with his homely shepherds, their flocks and dogs, have long been guiding the public taste to these objects. Year by year a larger proportion of our most able artists devote themselves to Scotch scenery, in which heather is seldom forgotten. Under the dull northern clouds, no other feature gives such a breadth of colour, such effective masses of purple to bestow the requisite tone on moorland or tempest. Even the barest crags, when

spread with this rich mantle, testify to Nature's universal liking for the beautiful, and form a link by which to connect their rugged horror with human associations of love and tender protection. Turner and the great landscape painters of the Middle Ages looked to bright skies and flowers and laughing streams of water in great measure to supply this void, and of course they were powerfully aided by the clearness of their horizons, the vast expanse of aerial perspective which they could command. But a painter would frequently be in evil straits in Scotland, especially when debarred from a sea or loch, were he also cut off from the use of heather. With it he can flood his foreground with as warm a glow as Giorgione diffused over his canvas. Allow him a few dark strips of pine forest, and distant heather-clad mountains touched with the setting sun's last rays, and, if he has sufficient skill in handiwork, he may rival the savage witchery of Ruysdael and Claude. The fulness, depth, and colour of heather, admirably adapt it to landscape composition, apart from the sentiment obtained by its use. And what dignity does it not acquire in the eyes of the lover of poetry as he remembers that it was of heather, according to Æschylus, that the telegraphic beacon fires were composed which flashed from afar to Clytemnestra at Argos the news of the taking of Troy!

But a Highland landscape is of itself sufficiently beautiful. It merely requires heather to give it the predominant tone, and interest a beholder by means of the many associations sure to suggest themselves when he sees the purpled braes. Take, for instance, the valley of the Garry in mid July. It possesses a charm of its own; and yet Scotland owns a thousand more valleys which to casual observers appear very similar when they are flooded with heather-bloom, such is the magic of this humble shrub. The prevailing colours in the open country on either side of the Garry are reds and purples, derived mainly from heather, but largely reinforced by clover and vetches. These tints are set off by the flaunting blossoms of the broom on every neglected corner, while the tender waxen *Erica tetralix* gathers round the head of each mimic burn that cleaves the moorland. Every here and there are patches of turnips, rejoicing the farmer's eye with their healthy green leaves, as yet free from the fly's ravages, while above them on the crags, and below towards the waste spots, an ocean of heather surges in, like the flood-tide, swallowing up, as it were, one by one the numberless grey and black trap boulders which are piled up in confusion, the gravestones of a long-buried world, and among which tower foxgloves of great size and beauty. On one side is a barley-field, in which the "blueys" are perceptibly colouring their ripening tints; the delicate pink of the corn-cockles, intermingled, helps the effect. Above tower many huge spruce firs, like giants, with drooping robes of green that love to sweep the earth. Some of them have lost their lead, but another soon takes its place, and the disfigurement is speedily unnoticed in the clouds of foliage high up, its light-green tips all drenched in sunshine. Behind them the mountains break away into the skies, their

shoulders covered with spires of young larch, while graceful birches come down the foreground intermixed with the heavy-hanging sprays of beech, like mountain nymphs which have left their stern seclusion to draw near to men. In the valley the bracken catches the sun's rays, and amidst its glitter the Garry may be discerned of the colour of strong tea, with boulders shining through its stream, like masses of cairngorm, when seen in the shade. Rain has fallen amongst the mountains during the night, and now the trees shake their leaves over the stream as it roars underneath, and the foxgloves near it dance in the echoes, and a thousand little burns, running into it, trickle everywhere through the lichen-spotted boulders! Indeed, seeing that all this country is the land of Burns, it is absurd for Glasgow and the neighbourhood to claim the designation in honour of the great national poet. What more typical view could be selected for a wild prospect of Highland heather? Only man is wanting, and at the next bend he is discovered in the shape of a salmon-fisher trying the big pool under the Cradle-stone. But he is rather late, as this river does not fish well in July, and the chances are that, if he does hook a salmon in the pool, it will rush on the wings of this little spate over the sharp rocks at the bottom and infallibly cut the line in half. And now the angler finds he has caught his "silver doctor," on the beach behind and snapped off the barb. With the patience of his fraternity, however, he proceeds to put on another, only too thankful meanwhile to find a cushion of heather close at hand on which to sit. The roar of the water floats to the ear softened by distance, the bee hums in the wild thyme, and the visitor to Scotland begins now to understand why its air and scenery are so invigorating.

To enter into the sentiment of loneliness which heather can bestow on a landscape, the traveller need only strike some ten miles to the east of the Garry, over the hills, at the back of the little village of Moulines. Here he will find himself surrounded with melancholy treeless hills and mountains, running down from Benygloe, with the little Brerechen burn winding through them, now half lost amongst a chaos of stones, now emerging into a crystal stream and actually here forming a miniature pool under a three-inch cascade. But it is full of little bright-coloured trout, and ministers to the wants of many mountain sheep and countless birds, like a thread of joy running through their innocent lives. Here a blackcock gallantly defends the retreat of his three cheepers by feigning excessive lameness, fluttering up and settling immediately with loud outcries. The sympathetic visitor follows him while the little ones escape amongst the heather, and soon he leaps up and speeds over the hill exulting that any one should fall into his trap. There lapwings flap about in an aimless manner, as if they too would imitate the tactics of the blackcock. Wheatears flit from mound to mound; corbies utter their forbidding croak from the hill-side where a dead lamb is probably lying; little parties of curlew with their scimitar-like beaks dash over the dreary moorland; jackdaws and occasionally a gull or two scream in the distance,

and a marsh-harrier beats the furze on the acclivities with as much regularity as would a pointer range for his master. This moor is a Paradise for ornithologists. Birds are everywhere, and birds seen in their most confiding moods, for man's feet seldom penetrate this wilderness. As we approach the burn, what is all this screaming and fluttering? A couple of ring-ousels fly out of a cairn of stones where their nest is, and hover round, now resting on a rail with expanded feathers and much insulted dignity at their privacy being invaded, now screaming and rushing by in terror lest the traveller should pursue his investigations amongst the stones. Having escaped from these furies a sand-piper proceeds to follow their example with still more emphatic flying and screaming. She must be deeply outraged, as she flies backwards and forwards, almost brushing against the heartless intruder amongst her domestic sanctities. If he possesses any kindness of nature, he retires quickly from the angry matron, and devotes himself to the flowers which edge the little burn. They form the only cheerful gleams in the landscape; eye-bright, milkworts, white and blue; butterworts, like tall violets, with curious greasy leaves; foxgloves, marsh bed-straw, sundew, and once more queen of every mound, the *Erica tetralix*. The mere enumeration of them transports us to the brook-side and its sighing, fluttering cotton-grasses, always the symbols of desolation. No sign of man can be seen. The mists float together, and merge their soft outlines in grey cloud; the air grows damp and damper; and now a drizzle sets in, and the swelling moorland is swathed in folds of storm-cloud. Then the drizzle gives way to steady rain that soon passes into drifted sheets, as the wind eddies down the southern valleys.

Wrapped in our macintosh, it is high time to struggle back towards Pitlochrie. Luckily we possess a flask filled with dews even more potent than those the skies are distilling over our devoted heads (for Pitlochrie boasts an admirable whisky), and at length a huge figure descending the brae at our side, like the Spectre of the Brocken, joins us, and turns out to be a shepherd, contentedly smoking his pipe, itself made out of the *bruyère* or heather of Southern France, though commerce contracts it into "briar" wood. If heather ministers to dreariness and solitude, it also affords its own solace to some enviable dispositions.

"Saft the day!" he says, in answer to our greeting. "Ou aye; it's a bit saft perhaps; but it'll no jist harm the hay much."

Yet half this deluge would drive a Southron squire or parson wild as he thought of his home-meadow. The virtue of resignation is strongly developed in Scottish peasants. Ere now we have seen them carting away barley sheaves in early winter, which had lain so long in the harvest fields, amongst the downpour of a wet autumn, that they had sprouted afresh and developed into a mass of living mouldiness, with a calm cheerfulness that spoke volumes for the solace of Calvinistic teaching. Much of it was useless for man, they told us, but it would do nicely for "the fools and the pigs." After all, fatalism, tempered with religion, is not

an unsuitable philosophy for people who live in dreary, desolate heather-wastes, overhung with murky skies, and ever liable to be drenched with persistent rain. The sunny epicureanism of the Bay of Naples would be greatly out of place in Strath Brora.

Turn we again the heathery kaleidoscope to Dartmoor in summer. A sense of breezy vastness is borne in upon the soul, as on the slope of some granite-crowned tor, sinking into the heather which so naturally invites to rest, the eye scans the leagues of ruddy plain, melting into blue hills and still bluer sky. From Hamilton Down, say, we are looking over "spacious Dertmoor," as Drayton calls it, over her swells and granite "clatters" to the beautifully proportioned tower of Widdicombe, so well known in the records of Demonology. Further north lies Manaton, Becky's Fall, and Lustleigh, ground dear to tourists. Far beyond these in the airy blue, the eye discerns Bovey Tracey, with its curious lignite formation, and a faint streak of white steam tells of the girdle which civilisation is gradually drawing round this "ancient moor." There are not many localities in England, possessing features of their own, where so extensive a view, such perfect solitude, can be obtained. Three lovers of Dartmoor, well known in the West of England, are more perfectly acquainted than any other men with every nook and corner of this waste of 130,000 acres, and one of them writes:—"Dartmoor is throughout a district of heather; and it is only over a very small portion of the Lake country that either the ling or the common heath is to be found, and then only in patches. The many lichens that attach themselves to the granite, staining and marking it, and often hanging from it in long, grey beards; the stretches of rush, fern and bent grass; the beds of white, fluttering cotton reed (the 'cana grass' of the Highlands); these, with the broken rocks and the tors themselves, supply the neutral tints of the wild landscape, lighted and set off in due season by the glow of heather, the golden blaze of furze, and along the stream and towards the border country, by regiments, and squadrons of tall foxgloves. Many plants common in Wales and the North do not occur here. This alone is sufficient to give a special character to the colouring."

From these artistic pleasures we descend the other side of the highland, and lo! from the opposite shoulder of thinly-covered granite the world breaks in upon the dreamer in the shape of a coach and four, crammed inside and out with tourists, crossing the moor by the great central track from Tavistock to Moreton Hampstead, and Exeter. When the unwelcome dust subsides we pass the Vitifer Tin Mine, where the hills are seamed with the excavations of the ancient "streamers" (as the primitive Keltic miners are here called), and breast the hill amidst the whistling of numerous ring-ousels to Grimspond. A chimney of the mine, seen on the opposite side of the valley, links the men of to-day with the primitive tin-smelters who probably inhabited this British village. Or the mind may pierce still further the mist of ages and view the men of the Bronze or even the Stone period within this fort, for no iron

weapons have as yet been found near the ancient monuments of Dartmoor. What a retrospect to call up as we stand within the rude granite enclosure of 500 feet in diameter, encircled by a wall of granite blocks some ten feet in thickness, but nowhere more than six feet high! Could any other natural feature so powerfully evoke the ghost of a long-buried Past as this heathery moorland? Twenty-five hut-circles, also composed of rough granite blocks, are far more easily traced than are the remains of the Yorkshire pit-villages, and the spring of water from which their ancient inhabitants drank yet runs within the enclosure, so changeless is Nature when left to herself. Overgrown with ferns and heath, the place is much as it must have appeared a year after the Romans or invading Saxons drove out its natives. Archæology asks in vain whether the name Grimspond is connected with a "boundary" (as in the many Grim's dykes of other parts of England), or, in view of the many dark superstitions of Dartmoor, whether it has aught to do with Grima, said to be a Saxon name for the Evil One; or, lastly, whether Grym, the fisherman and eponymus of Grimsby, left here also traces of his presence. It must belong to Keltic times, however, if it may be regarded as part of the group of river and place names of this district; Dart, Teign, Taw, and the many compounds of Tor, itself connected with the Hebrew for "rock" and "passing with an early migration westward" from Tyre to these Dartmoor Tors.* Every stone before us, therefore, may well carry thought backwards to those Phœnician traders who, while buying the Cornish tin, left the Sanskrit name for it—*Kāstira*—on the *Cassiterides* or Tin Islands, and perhaps on *Cassiter Street*, *Bodmin*. To find another link with that remote past, the very faith which now gives England its national pre-eminence may have been handed down to us by the men who once trampled this heather, and have long turned to dust under it. Amid these deeper meditations on the stone monuments of the moor, the wayfarer regains the ancient trackway below and makes for Two Bridges on the West Dart before darkness falls, mindful of the moormen's rhyme—

River of Dart, river of Dart,
Every year thou claimest a heart.

P'enty of granite ribs broken from the moor's backbone strew his path on both sides, and their grey glimmer will long be unsubdued by night, as Browning has noted, with the subtle observation of a true poet—

Piled stones that gleam unground away
By twilight's hungry jaws, which champs fine all beside
I' the solitary waste we grope through.—(*Fine*).

And still heather is everywhere around, and runs down the peninsula in front till it fitly enough dips down between the Land's End and the Scilly Isles into that legendary imaginative fairy-land, the long-lost *Lyonnesse*,

A land of old upheaven from the abyss,
By fire to sink into the abyss again.

* Earle, *Philology of the English Tongue*, p. 3.

We must end with one more sketch from the "land of brown heath and shaggy wood." It is an afternoon late in September, giving another aspect of heather and one well known to many an Englishman. A few hours of fine weather are delusively succeeding several days of persistent rain. The birches are dropping masses of gold, the fir woods impenetrable depths of gloom, whence come and go ærial whispers, preludes of approaching storm, but like Cassandra's forebodings utterly distrusted by two sanguine sportsmen who are striding over the blanched heather-blooms on the open moor. Grouse have already packed, and the gillie and couple of dogs which have descended the slope before them have been worse than useless on the upper corries. It is in no contented mood, therefore, that they come down the hill-track by the shieling to the loch. Its sullen surface, streaked with one flying sunbeam, and opening in the distance upon a grey sea ruffled into white, around vast crags where the sea-fowl are wheeling and clanging in countless flocks, prescient of the tempest, deepens their sombre thoughts by the contrast it presents to its recent beauty. But who shall dare to describe seas which have lately been so well painted by Mr. Black? Where the moor dies out and cultivation begins to snatch stunted crops of oats from its wide expanse, rises the Kirk, surrounded by grey lichen-tinted walls. As they pass through the burial ground, the tombstones attract the strangers' notice. Wonderful figures of Death are carved on some, like a boy in buttons holding a scythe, and the artist has devoted extreme pains to the waistcoat buttons. Near these, in letters yet deeply cut into a granite slab, they read—

HEIR LYES ANE VERTEOOS MAN IAMES SHIOCH SOM TYME
BAYLIE OF HIS BROUGHE OF GLASGOWE 1686.

Spite of the sombre afternoon, with that instinctive habit of playing Old Mortality so natural to man, they linger amongst the graves. The mists descend from the hills they have left and draw nearer the dark enclosure, the deep hoarse roar of the river resounds from below, and where the mist-wreaths occasionally lift, it seems to rush down from the skies in a turbid cataract, while the wrinkled gneiss of the Ben behind looms like the Matterhorn against its dark cloud-curtain, and the little burn that ordinarily sparkles happily down its face to-day flings itself down in masses of foam. Much heather mingles with the coarse grass in the sacred enclosure, as if man had made many attempts to extirpate it, but was now compelled to acquiesce in its usurpation. Outside it is much blackened in places where it has been burnt, while on the hill-tops it is soft and carpet-like, grateful to blackcock and grouse, and ankle deep, whereas on the border land are tufts and bushes knee-deep, running into bogs where, like the Isle of Arran heather, it is nearly waist-high. A few pink flowers yet linger, but most of the shoots bear blanching blossom, and at every dozen yards a bluebell full of dew appears. Stagshorn moss crawls between the tufts over large grey stones, which sometimes occur in heaps, and these again intensify themselves into cairns on the top of each mound. Vegetation is brighter in the marsh below, where grass of

Parnassus, red rattles, and the like yet survive to mourn Summer. No small birds are in sight, but blackcocks are heard crowing on the hill-side to the left, and the sound harmonises well with the dreary landscape.

As the sportsmen emerge they meet a funeral entering; the shepherd has been brought down from the hill-side shieling to his last quiet resting-place. Reflecting how the same lot awaits monarch and slave—*omnes eodem cogimur*—the young men reverently take off their hats, and watch the minister with the little train of mourners silently enter the yard. The shepherd, wont to rest in the shieling, its roof heaped up with peat and heather, will now sleep "until the day break and the shadows flee away," under the same familiar covering. The Englishmen miss the consolatory sentences of their own Burial Service, but the hard-featured Scotch faces before them are composed to a stern resignation. The minister has told them ere they started that they too have their life-work to perform faithfully, and the sense of being unprofitable servants is now being borne into their souls, as it only is on such occasions. Women as a rule do not accompany funerals in Scotland, and the widow sits by the turf fire in the shieling, rocking herself to and fro and "crooning" the while. The body is lowered, and the rich black earth heaped over it, and all turn to go; Donald, "puir beastie," his master's collie, lingers with downcast tail and ears, but is sternly whistled off. The men shake their heads and set their lips tighter as they retire, while one of the Englishmen, who is probably a poet in his small way, and

Hath among least things
An under-sense of greatest,—

plucks a twig of heather from the neighbouring hillock, and thinks how fitly heath should grow over a man whose life was never dissociated from its ever-present spell—whose greatest delight it was to tread the heather braes, and hear the wild bee murmur in its purple masses. And then the clouds break in a soft deluge that overwhelms day, and, with another lover of Scotland, the gathered sprig of heather, hastily thrust into the pocket, may become a memorial of sober thoughts with which Nature in her present mood appears to sympathise. The pale, shrivelled blossoms, seen after many days, may haply blossom afresh in high aspirations, the parents of noble deeds, linked to them by some mysterious connection with the solemn spectacle and accompanying reflections during which they were gathered. For association, as we have striven to show, has wondrous power; and sentiment is very far from being a weak incentive to goodness, and heather suggests many pleasant reminiscences to those who mentally connect it with a long series of autumnal rambles. If the ancients (as its scientific name *Erica* shows) regarded heather as a natural substitute for lithotrity, much more wisely do we deem it a symbol of happy rest and recreation.

The Death-stone: a Lyric Drama from the Japanese.

UP a narrow alley in that part of Yedo known as Ji-gura, or the "rice store," the tourist, were any strange chance to direct his steps along a path so little frequented, might start on hearing the sound of vociferously loud, and apparently angry, voices issuing from one of the houses on his right. The chiming in of the drum or of the flute would, however, soon reassure him: no deadly quarrel is being fought out inside those gates; for in Japan, as in more Western lands, sanguinary feuds have now quite gone out of fashion, and the loud, angry-sounding voices are those, not of disputants, but of actors.

Not, indeed, that it is a play-house, properly so-called, at whose door he has arrived. Nothing could well offend the actors more than to have the scene of their labours styled a theatre. It is not a theatre, but a "Nō-butai"—a place where is performed the *Nō*, the mediæval lyric drama of Japan, the very aristocracy of the histrionic art. The audience itself is almost unmixedly aristocratic. It is small—barely numbering one hundred persons—but scarcely a plebeian face is to be seen among its ranks. And well may this be so, for the aristocracy, who almost alone preserve the literary traditions of old Japan, are alone qualified to appreciate a performance so far removed from common sympathies, speaking in a dialect so difficult and so different from that in common use, and presented in a form so completely devoid of all the adventitious aids of scenery and stage effect, that to a native of the lower classes it would be scarcely less unintelligible than to our newly-landed British tourist.

As in other countries, so also in Japan, the drama had a religious origin, the primary object of the *Nō* being to propitiate the gods, and call down their blessing upon the country. It was at first but an adaptation of the "Kagura" and "Bu-gaku" dances,* entertainments which still exist, and which consist entirely of dancing to an orchestral accompaniment by masked and quaintly costumed performers. In time, however, words were added to the rhythmic dance, the masks were, in most cases, thrown off, and although the supreme importance still assigned to the chorus left to the performance its mainly lyric character, the introduction of individual personages led to the adoption of a dramatic unity in the plot.

* The "Kagura" are of native origin, and symbolise some of the oldest traditions of the Shinto gods. The "Bu-gaku" were brought over from China, and were first performed in Japan by one Hada Hawakatsu, in the sixth century of our era.

To one Jizaki Kan-ami is ascribed the fixing of the *Nô* in its present form; and some of the pieces written conjointly by him and his son Sé-ami are still among the most interesting of those to be seen acted in Yedo at the present day. Great doubt appears, however, to hang over the precise authorship of most of these dramas, principally on account of the Japanese custom of attributing to the head of the family of *Nô* actors at any given time all the pieces brought out under his auspices. The first *Nô* was performed by the above-mentioned father and son before Yoshimitsu, the third Sho-gun of the Ashikaga dynasty, towards the end of the fourteenth century. But the regulations concerning the form of the stage, as well as various points of detail and of etiquette, were not fixed till some thirty years later, when Sé-ami and his son Oto-ami acted at Tadasu-gawara, in Kiyoto, in aid of the funds for the restoration of a certain Buddhist temple, on a stage provided by the then Sho-gun, Yoshimasa. It is this stage, whose every dimension has been carefully handed down by tradition, that has served, with but few and trifling alterations, as a model to all those that have since then been erected. It would be easy, following the native authorities, to say a great deal on this head. But we fear that our English readers would hardly care to follow us through the labyrinth of partly prosaic and partly mystical detail elaborated by the heads of "The Four *Nô* Families" in their memorial to the Sho-gun Iyétuna (1624-1655), wherein the arrangements of the stage are explained with painful minuteness, and not a few of them traced back to reasons founded on the various influences of "In" and "Yô," the passive and active principles of Chinese philosophy.

Suffice it to say, that the stage is a square wooden room, open on all sides but one, and supported on pillars, the side of the square being about 18 English feet. It is surmounted by a roof somewhat resembling those to be seen on the temples, and is connected with the green-room by a gallery some 9 feet wide. Part of the action occasionally takes place upon this gallery. Added on to the back of the square stage is a narrow space, where sits the orchestra, consisting of one flute-player, two performers on instruments which, in the absence of a more fitting name, we may, perhaps, call tambourines, and one beater of the drum; while the chorus, whose number is not fixed, squat on the ground to the right of the spectator. In a line with the chorus, between it and the audience, sits the less important of the two actors during the greater portion of the piece. The back of the stage—the only side not open to the air—is painted with a pine tree, in accordance with antique usage, while, equally in conformity to established rules, three small pine trees are planted in the court, dividing the gallery from the space occupied by the less distinguished portion of the audience. The covered place for the audience runs round three sides of the stage, the most honourable seats being those which directly face it. It need hardly be said that there are no "fauteuils"—spectators and actors all equally squat according to the

immemorial custom of their countrymen. Smoking is allowed, as in all other places in Japan; but it should be remembered that the *Nô* theatre, like almost all other places in Japan, is open to the air of heaven. The good lady of the house, assisted by her maid, hurries hither and thither with the fish and rice and other dainty morsels ordered for the audience from a neighbouring tea-house. For though each lyric piece takes, on an average, but one hour in representing, the entertainment lasts all day, as five or six *Nô* are given in succession, and the intervals between them filled up by the performance of comic scenes.

Masks are worn by such of the actors as take the parts of females or of supernatural beings, and the dresses are gorgeous in the extreme; but scenery, as before said, is unknown on the *Nô* stages, though carried to such perfection at the regular theatres of Japan. Probably a true sense of the fitness of things has, on this point, kept the actors faithful to the old traditions of their art.* For, on the few occasions, occurring mostly in the more modern pieces, where this rule is broken through, and an attempt made at scenic effect, the spectator cannot help feeling that the spell is, in a manner, broken—so completely ideal a performance is but marred by the adoption of any of the adventitious aids of the melodramatic stage. The same remark applies to the statuesque immobility of the actors, and to the peculiar intonation of the recitative. When once the ear has become used to its loudness, it is by no means displeasing; while the measured cadences of the choric chant are, from the very first, both soothing and impressive. Like praise cannot, alas! be awarded to the music, which, to an ear trained to admire the divine harmonies of the great composers of the West, is little less than torture. Happily, though there is a good deal of this abominable strumming and mewing, it occurs mostly as an interlude, or as an accompaniment to the dances, during whose performance the European spectator will probably feel disposed to apply himself more intently to his chopsticks than to what is going forward on the stage, and thus it does not interfere with the pleasure of listening to the choric songs.

The reader will not be surprised at our dwelling so long on the merely outward features of *Nô*. The version given below of one of these pieces speaks sufficiently for the character of the dramas themselves. Not that it is pretended that a translation into so utterly alien a language as English can give any but a very bald idea of the manifold charms of the original. Indeed, a much more skilful hand might endeavour in vain to strike into the rendering of it some faint echo of those chords of verbal and local association, which in Japanese poetry, perhaps more than in that of any other country, contribute so greatly to the harmony and beauty of the whole. All that has been aimed at is the placing before

* For a different view of this absence of scenery, see Mitford's *Tales of Old Japan*, vol. i., p. 161, where an interesting analysis is given of a set of *Nô* acted before H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh.

English readers some sort of copy—though, doubtless but a blurred and imperfect copy—of one of those dramas, to assist at whose representation is among the greatest pleasures of the most highly-cultivated Japanese.

The *Death-Stone* may be taken as a fair specimen of the *Nô*. It is not one of the very oldest; neither is it of the newest, though on the whole, it certainly belongs to the older school. Scores of the *Nô* resemble it in its general features. The priest on his religious pilgrimage, his meeting at some celebrated spot with an unknown personage who relates to him the local legend, and the subsequent revelation of this personage as the god or demon of the place; such is the outline of the majority of the earlier pieces. Later on, the style of the *Nô* writers changed, and other objects occupied their attention. The plot descends from cloud-land to the solid earth. History, not legend, is the burden of their song. Indeed, the song itself grows faint; for prose encroaches upon verse, and drives the chorus into the background, while the adoption of scenery, the multiplication of personages, and the breaking up of the dramatic unity of the piece, bring about a new set of conditions, out of which, naturally and inevitably, is developed the modern prose melodrama of Japan.*

THE DEATH-STONE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ: The Spirit of the "Flawless Jewel Maiden."

The Buddhist Priest Gen-ō.

The Chorus.

Priest. What though the vapours of the fleeting scene
Obscure the view of pilgrims here below;
With heart intent on heav'nly things unseen,
I take my journey through this world of woe.

I am a priest, and Gen-ō is my name. With a heart ever fixed on the path of wisdom, I had long groaned over the imperfection of my spiritual insight. But now I see clear, and, with the sacerdotal besom, I shall sweep the cobwebs from the eyes of men. After sojourning in the province of Michinoku, I would now fain turn my steps towards the capital, and there pass the winter season of meditation. I have crossed the river Shirakawa, and have arrived at the moor of Nasu† in the province of Shimotsuké.

* The translator must not omit to state that he is under obligations to Mr. W. G. Aston, of H.B.M.'s Legation, Yedo, for several valuable suggestions as to the rendering of the piece.

† The moor of Nasu lies some 90 miles to the north of Yedo.

Alas ! the vapours of the fleeting scene
 Obscure the view of pilgrims here below ;
 Strike out the hope in heav'nly things unseen,
 • What guide were left us through this world of woe ! *

Spirit. Rest not under the shadow of this stone !

Priest. Wherefore not ? Is there any reason for not resting under the shadow of this stone ?

Spirit. Yes ; this is the Death-stone of the moor of Nasu ; and not men only, but birds even and beasts perish if they approach it.

Needs there my warning ? Hast thou not heard tell
 Of Nasu's Death-stone, and its fatal spell ?

I entreat thee, depart !

Priest. What is it that maketh this stone so eager to take life ?

Spirit. It is that into it, in the olden time, entered the spirit of her who was called the "Flawless Jewel Maiden," concubine to the Emperor Toba-no-in.

Priest. Into this stone ? on this far distant road ?
 Methought Kiyoto was the girl's abode.

Spirit. Verily, it is because there is a reason for this that the story hath been handed down from the olden time.

Priest. Thy words and thine appearance seem to tell me that thou knowest this story.

Spirit. No ! no ! I know it but in outline. Fleeting as the dew is the memory of the maiden's fate.

Priest. Erst through the King's abode,

Spirit. Proudly the maiden strode,

Priest. But on this desolate road,

Spirit. Now doom'd to dwell,

Priest. Crime upon crime she heaps,

Spirit. Vainly the pilgrim weeps,

Priest. Cursing with dying lips,

Spirit. The fatal spell !

I.

Chorus. The Death-stone stands on Nasu's moor
 Through winter snows and summer heat ;
 The moss grows grey upon its sides,
 But the foul demon haunts it yet.

* This stanza is an adaptation of part of an ode by the Chinese poet who is known in Japan under the name of Haku-raku-ten.

Chill blows the blast : the owls' sad choir
 Hoots hoarsely through the moaning pines ;
 Among the low chrysanthemums
 The skulking fox, the jackal whines.

II.

Fair was the girl,—beyond expression fair ;
 But what her country, who her parents were
 None knew. It seems as if the misty space
 Beyond the clouds * must be the native place
 Of one who, soon as shown to mortal sight,
 Ascended straightway to the cloudy height.
 For not in vain were beauty's charms display'd
 Before th' Imperial eyes : so fair a maid
 Was surely born to share a monarch's bed.

Spirit. Once did the Emperor's Majesty see fit
 To put to proof the lovely damsel's wit.

III.

Chorus. Nor did she fail in aught : the sacred text
 Which guides our steps through this world to the next,
 The Chinese classics, too, Confucian lore,
 Japan's sweet poets of the days of yore,—
 She knew them all, nor was it all she knew,
 For she herself was bard and seer too.

Spirit. A mind so flawless in a form so fair
 Deserved the name her lord then gave to her.

IV.

Chorus. Once the Mikado made a splendid feast
 At the cool summer-palace : every guest
 That of accomplishments or wit could boast
 Was bidden there—a gay and brilliant host,
 Like to the clouds, from out whose fleecy sphere
 Th' Imperial kindred, like the moon, shone clear.

V.

But hark ! what rumour mingles with the strains
 Of sweetest music ! see ! the heav'nly plains
 Are wrapp'd in inky darkness. Not a star—
 The moon not risen yet : but from afar,
 Heralded by the rustling of the shower,
 The storm comes howling through the festive bower.

* Literally, "above the clouds," i.e., the Imperial Palace. The courtiers are called "the people above the clouds,"

The lanterns are blown out : " A light ! a light ! " }
 Cry all at once ; but from the pitchy night
 No answer comes to soothe their anxious fright. }

VI.

But lo ! from out the " Jewel Maiden's " frame
 There's seen to dart a weirdly lustrous flame !
 It grows, it spreads, it fills th' Imperial halls :
 The painted screens, the gilt and damask'd walls,
 The very trees, erst plung'd in blackest night,
 Sparkle and glitter in the lurid light.

VII.

Spirit. That hour the fiend's foul witchcraft was revealed.

Chorus. That hour the fiend's foul witchcraft was revealed.

The subtle venom noiselessly instilled
 Into her lordly lover's pearly frame *

Prey'd on his vitals like a burning flame.

Then spake the Court Magician : " Without doubt
 That harlot is the culprit : cast her out !

Drive her away ! Seest not the impish plan

Laid to destroy thy crown and Great Japan ? "

Resentment dire then fills th' Imperial breast :

He now hates most what once he loved the best.

Driven with curses from the monarch's door,

The witch now haunts this drear and distant moor.

Priest. Thou hast deigned to tell me this long history—who art thou ?

Spirit. Wherefore any longer conceal it ? The demon that of old
 dwelt in the breast of the " Flawless Jewel Maiden," and that now in-
 habits the Death-stone of the moor of Nasu, is none other than myself.

Priest. Speakest thou truly ? Well ! well ! it is the soul sunk
 lowest in the depths of wickedness that rises highest on the pinnacle of
 virtue.

I will bestow on thee the priestly robe and begging-bowl.† But thou
 must reveal thyself to mine eyes in thy proper shape.

Spirit. Alas ! what sorrow and confusion !

In the garish light of day

My body fades away,

Like Mount Asama's fires : ‡

* The " Pearly Body " is a phrase commonly used to signify the person of the Mikado.

† For a priest to bestow his own robe on a favourite disciple, says the commen-
 tator, a practice of which Buddha himself set the example.

‡ An active volcano, situated in the province of Shinano.

With the night I'll come again,
 Confess my sins with pain
 And new-born pure desires.

Chorus.

Dark will be the night :
 But her red lustrous light
 Ne'er needs the moon.
 Wait ! fear not ! she cries,
 Watch on with trusting eyes :
 My hour'll come soon.

(The Spirit vanishes into the Stone.)

Priest. 'Tis said of stocks and stones : they have no soul.

Yet, what signifieth the text : "Herbs and trees, stones and rocks, shall all enter into Nirvana," save that from the beginning a divine essence dwelt within them ? No ! if I bestow on this demon the sacerdotal robe and bowl, who can doubt but that for it, too, Nirvana will throw open its gates ? Therefore, with offerings of flowers and of fragrant incense, I recite the Scriptures with my face turned towards the stone, and I exorcise it thus :

Spirit of the Death-stone ! I conjure thee : whence comest thou ?
 Why cumberest thou the earth ?

Tarry not ! reveal thyself ! reveal thyself !

E'en for such as thee mine intercessions shall cause Nirvana to fling open its gates.

E'en such as thou shalt put on the majesty of a god.

Hear me ! hear me !

(The Stone is rent asunder, and the Demon issues from it.)

Spirit.

In stones there are spirits :
 In the waters is a voice heard :
 The winds blow across the firmament !

Chorus.

Oh ! horror ! horror !
 The Death-stone's rent in twain ;
 The Demon stands revealed !

Priest.

Oh ! horror ! horror !
 The Death-stone's rent in twain :
 O'er moor and field
 A lurid glare
 Burns fierce. There stands revealed
 A fox—and yet again
 The phantom seems to wear
 The aspect of a maiden fair !

Spirit.

No more the mystery can be concealed.
 I am she, who first, in Ind, was the demon to whom Prince Han-zoku

paid homage at the murderous mound. In Great Cathay, I took the form of Hô-ji, consort of the Emperor Yû-ô; and at the court of the Rising Sun I was the "Flawless Jewel Maiden," concubine to the Emperor Toba-no-In.

Intent on the destruction of the crown and empire of Japan, I assumed the shape of a fair maiden, whose presence caused the Imperial person to languish in disease. Already was I exulting in the thought of sending him to the grave, when Abé-no-Yasunari, the Court Magician, directed against me his powers of exorcism; he set up the many-coloured symbols of the gods upon the altar,* and gave them also into my hands.

I.

Chorus. With fervent zeal the Great Magician prays :
 With fervent zeal the Great Magician prays :
 The Demon hears with tremulous amaze
 The solemn exorcism, whose every word
 Pierces her spirit like a two-edged sword.
 Not long such pain and terror can be borne :
 Awed into silence, and with anguish torn,
 She spreads her wings, she rises on the wind,
 Nor dares to cast one fearful glance behind.
 Away ! away ! o'er lands and seas she soars,
 Nor rests until she gains these distant moors.

II.

Spirit. Then the Mikado issued his commands,
Chorus. Then the Mikado issued his commands,
 To the two satraps of the neighb'ring lands :
 "Drive out," spake he, "the Fox, the Demon foul !"[†]
 And they, obedient to the word, enroll
 Skilled marksmen, who, for five-score days and more,
 Practise on dogs, to make their arch'ry sure.
 May we not thus trace back to that command
 The custom of dog-shooting in our land ?[‡]

* The "hêi-haku," or "go-hêi," small strips of paper, hung up in the temple to represent the Shinto gods.

† Innumerable are the stories of foxes and cats assuming human shape, in order to carry out their diabolical designs, and to this day the belief in the reality of such occurrences has firm hold on the less educated classes of the community. It is to be understood that the "Jewel Maiden" had originally been a fox, and that the moor of Nasu was her native place.

‡ The custom of practising archery on dogs lasted on to the time of the late revolution. It was not, latterly, a cruel sport, as the arrows were blunted. The dogs were brought into a closed arena, and the marksmen were mounted, the horses, it is said, enjoying the excitement as much as their masters. The members of the princely family of Satsuma were specially noted for their skill in dog-shooting.

III.

Then the two satraps, armed with bow and spear,
 And myriad horsemen brought from far and near,
 Beat all the moor, surround its every part;
 Thick as the hail-storm fly the spear and dart.
 And I, poor Fox, all hope of rescue flown,
 Wounded and dying on the heath sink down.
 But yet my ghost (though, like the morning dew,
 'Twas wrapt away from grosser human view)
 Ceas'd not to haunt this distant, des'late moor,
 And in the Death-stone dwelt its fatal power,
 Which, ever watchful, both by day and night,
 In murd'ring weary wand'ers took delight—
 Till thou, Great Buddha, send'st thy priest this way:
 Then did religion reassert her sway,
 Breaking my chains asunder, and the spell
 Which bound me captive to the powers of hell:
 "I swear, O man of God, I swear," she cries,
 "To thee whose blessing wafts me to the skies,
 I swear a solemn oath, that shall endure
 Firm as the Death-stone standing on the moor,
 That from this hour I'm God's for e'er and e'er!"
 She spake and vanished into thinnest air.*

THE END.

* The good priest's blessing does *not* seem, however, to have been effectual; for the translator is assured by credible Japanese that a poisonous stream may still be seen issuing from the "Death-stone" thrice every day.

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"TILL, MR. FAULDER, IN YOUR BOATHEE HEDDER?"

Across the Peat-fields.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

OLD MSS.



NOT long ago the children opened a drawer in my writing-table and found a little roll of dusty manuscript which I myself had written many years ago. It was a story in which some true things were told with others that were not true, all blended together in that same curious way in which, when we are asleep, we dream out allegories, and remembrances, and indications that we scarcely recognise when we are awake. Story-telling is, in truth, a sort of dreaming, from

which the writer only quite awakes when the last proof is corrected. These visions seem to haunt one, and to contend with realities, and at times to flash into definite shape, and voice, and motion, and to hold their own almost independently of our will, and to impress us, as real voices and impulses do in everyday existence.

When the children, who take a faithful interest in my performances, brought me this dusty packet I read it through, and once more found myself in a little village in France, which I had scarcely thought of for years and years. There it stood among its plains, sunning itself in the autumn rays; all the people who used to live there with us came marching out of the drawer, bringing fruit in their hands, rolling barrows piled with golden pumpkins, carrying great baskets of purple plums, or sweet greengages oozing golden juice, great jugs of milk, and wheaten loaves baked in the country ovens. Not only people, but the bygone animals came too out

of this ark. A black retriever making for the water, the turkey-cocks perching on our doorsteps, the little black hen with the crooked bill; the poor tortoiseshell cat, who died of hunger, shut up in the cellar below the kitchen. We had a cook—a hateful woman—who had once tried to poison the poor creature, and who laughed at our dismay when we learnt its ultimate fate. No one else had heard its cries. The rambling old place seemed made for some such tragedy, piled together with dark corners, hidden passages, stone flights, and heavy masonry. The walls were of thickest stone. There was a sort of dungeon under the flight of steps that led to the house-door, and the dining-room had two hiding-places opening on either side of the jam cupboard. All round the drawing-room a secret passage ran between the wall and the wooden panelling. This passage was lighted by a narrow window, all hidden by leaves of the vine-tree. The drawing-room windows opened into a sweet garden full of flowers and straggling greenery. At the end of the walk by the vine wall stood a little pavilion, with a pointed roof and a twirling weathercock, with casements north, east, and west. This little pavilion seemed to guard the entrance of the village. People said that the old farm had once been a hunting-lodge built by Henry IV., who came here with his Court. I could imagine any one of the old pictures I had seen in the Louvre and elsewhere made alive, the gay cavalcade sounding and galloping away, disappearing along the highway; horses prancing, squires following, horns sounding, and scarfs flying in the air. Sometimes the King ruled at the Château de Visy, so the legend ran; but the château was the Queen's and the hunting-lodge was the King's, and the little pavilion where we girls all did our lessons together, and blotted our German exercises, had been built for some s regretted lady of the Court.

Visy le Roi is a village not far from Corbeil, a well-known country town in France. It is a district where the sun sets across miles of flat spreading fields that are crossed and recrossed in every direction by narrow canals, of which the sluggish waters reflect the willows planted along their course. These streams are darkened by the colour of the banks on either side. The earth is nearly black; the water is stained by strange tints. The country is sombre with peat-fields, and here and there are peat-manufactories, standing lonely against the sky. When the light blazes it is reflected on the waters as they flow with a certain sluggish persistent tide. Every here and there at cross-ways are deep pools where lilies and green tangles are floating on the brown eddies. Sometimes of an evening, when the sun sets over the black fields, long-drawn chords of light strike against the stems of the poplar-trees, and then their quaint mop heads seem on fire, while the flames roll down from the West with vapour and with murky splendour. The figures passing along the roads on the way homewards, the blue blouses, the country-women carrying their baskets on their arms or their faggots on their backs, are strangely illumined by these last beams of

daylight. Some of Millet's sketches at Paris a year ago brought a remembrance to my mind of the roads and country places that I had haunted in my early youth. Few painters have drawn such wide fields as he; plains stretching so far—hours so long, as I remember them in those days, when they passed with strangely slow and heavy footsteps. The hours are shorter now. The plains are sooner crossed; horizons close in. Hope is less, and less deferred.

The inhabitants of Visy le Roi might be bakers or grocers in public; in private, after business hours, and at the backs of their houses, they were comfortable people, with pleasant gardens—in which they spent much of their time, among an abundance of pumpkins, of vine wreaths, of reflecting glass globes on wooden stems, and blue lupins. Some of the people in the village, finding the gardens at the back of their houses insufficient for their requirements, cultivated quadrangles outside the village, where they would water their rose-trees quietly of summer evenings.

The Maire of Visy le Roi was very proud of his garden, which was neatly spread out in front of his stone house, and ornamented by two large black balls reflecting each other and the street, and our opposite gateway, and our dining-room windows, and his tidy plots of marigolds and scarlet-runners, which were our admiration. He used to be specially active on summer evenings, and might be seen clipping, and chopping, and brushing away insects. He was not married in those days; he settled in Normandy after his first marriage, and sold his property at Visy. In fact, circumstances had made the place distasteful to him. He was a sensitive, kind-hearted man, although a somewhat absurd one. One of our party, a young French lady, who has since made a name for herself, was a good musician, and evening after evening I have sat listening to the flow of her music and the scrapings of M. Fontaine's violin. I made bold to put them into a book long after, but here they are in the catgut. How plainly the strains still sound coming out of the darkened room, with the figures sitting round; the windows are open to the dim garden, and I can still hear the dinning accompaniment of the grass-hoppers outside whistling their evening song to the rising stars.

My granduncle, who was of an ingenious turn of mind, had come to Visy to try a machine he had invented, and to make experiments in the manufacture of peat-fuel. It is certain that with his machine, and the help of an old woman and a boy, he could produce as many little square blocks of firing in a day as M. MÉRARD, the rival manufacturer, in three, with all his staff, including his cook and his carter's son. The carter himself, a surly fellow, had refused to assist in the factory. It is true that our machine cost about 300*l.* to start with, and that it was constantly getting out of order and requiring the doctoring of a Paris engineer; but, setting that aside, as Monsieur Fontaine proved to us after an elaborate calculation, it was clear that a saving of 35 per cent. was effected by our process.

The engineer from Paris having failed us on two occasions, I believe that my granduncle had at one time serious thoughts of constructing a mechanical engineer, who was to keep the whole thing in order, and only to require an occasional poke himself to continue going. I remember once seeing a wooden foot wrapped up in cotton wool in a box in our workshop, but I believe this being went no further. The old woman's wages, with the boy's, were fifteen francs a week, amounting to about seven pounds for the three months we were at Visy. The Frankenstein's foot alone cost twelve pounds, so that it is easy to reckon how other more complicated organs would have run up the bill. I asked my uncle once whether the creature when complete would be content to live in the shed, or insist on coming home of an evening and joining the family circle. "Who can tell?" said my granduncle, laughing; "perhaps it may turn out an agreeable member of society, and Fontaine himself will be cut out in his attentions to Mademoiselle M  rard."

Old M  rard was the rival manufacturer. He came down in his slippers one day to inspect our designs; he did not think much of them, and declined to purchase the patent. He and Madame M  rard, and Mademoiselle L  onie, were, so he told us, starting for their estate in Normandy. Madame M  rard and her daughter never missed the bathing season, and preferred being accompanied by him; he was a tidy-looking old fellow, Madame was a dark and forbidding-looking person—a brunette, my polite old uncle called her, when I complained that she frightened me with her moustache and gleaming white teeth. Madame M  rard had a strange effect upon people's nerves. I always felt as if she was going to bite me. As for Mademoiselle L  onie, she was a washed-out, vapid, plaintive personage, in grey alpaca and plaid ribbons. She embroidered, she sang out of tune, she shuddered at the mention of a Protestant. She would have been a nonentity but for her ill temper, which fascinated Fontaine. I never could otherwise account for the attraction which our friend seemed to find in her society.

CHAPTER II.

BLACK CANALS AND YELLOW PUMPKINS.

AFTER the M  rards' departure for Petit-port, we saw a great deal of M. le Maire. He was a sociable creature, and consoled himself for his L  onie's absence by various gentle flirtations in the village. Our life would have been monotonous but for his cheerful visits and friendly introductions. All our acquaintance in the place we owed to him. He introduced us to the new-made Lords of the Manor, the Fourniers at the Castle (he brought us a message from Madame Fournier requesting us to call there any day our religion might permit), the M  rards, the fascinating Madame Valmy, Captain Thompson, our compatriot; upon all these persons we called at Fontaine's suggestion, and escorted by him. But we did not greatly care

for society. Some of us were too old, some of us were too young, to need much company beside our own. We young ones lived in good society. Poets sang to us in the mornings under the shady vine trellis, and of evenings by lamplight and by moonlight; we had the company of philosophers too, and of romancers, charming in those days with an art which I can remember with a sort of wonder. So we rose betimes, worked and rested, studying in barns and trellised bowers, exploring the farms and farmyards round about. When we had written our exercises, practised our fingers upon the piano, closed our lesson-books, agricultural arts awaited us. Muslin bags had to be made for the sweet heavy bunches of ripening grapes. The pumpkins had to be met, counted, disposed of. I remember one dewy morning when the first pumpkin opened fire, if I may so describe its advent. Next day there were twenty large golden disks, and then from every side they upheaved, growing upon us hour by hour, multiplying, rolling in, in irresistible numbers; hanging from the tops of the walls. From every corner these monstrous creatures encircled us. Poor Fontaine was in despair; it was a plague of pumpkins. "There are those who like pumpkin soup," said he, doubtfully. Here we all cried out, protesting we had had pumpkin soup every day for a week; we did not like it at all. But my cousin, Mary Williamson, the housekeeper, declared that it was absolutely necessary, and so the remainder of our stay was embittered to us by the tides of this milky, seedy, curd-like mixture.

Our visit to the Fourniers was a very solemn event. From the very first Monsieur Fontaine had been anxious that we should realise the glories of the Castle.

"You will see—pure Henri Quatre—Monsieur Fournier bought it direct from the Mesnils, and has not yet refurnished the reception-rooms. The Mesnils had owned it for years, but the late Count ruined the family, and they were forced to sell at his death. Madame la Comtesse signed the papers before me as well as her son. She was in a fury, poor woman! I tried to soothe her; she flung the pen into my face; her son, Monsieur Maurice, apologised. 'My dear friend,' I said to him, 'do not mention it.'"

Monsieur Fontaine came to fetch us on the appointed day. My cousins could not join us, but my uncle put on his short round cloak, and we set off together. On the way along the village street, Monsieur Fontaine gave us information about the various inhabitants. "Ah! there goes the doctor; that good Poujac; he is the most amiable character. Monsieur le Curé says he never had a more devout parishioner, and yet if I were seriously ill, I should send to Corbeil, I think, for further advice. Madame Valmy has the greatest confidence in him. He nursed her husband in his last illness. It was most alarming for her—it was cholera. Poor Valmy died within twenty-four hours; she is only now out of mourning. She has passed the winter at Paris—I should like to pass the winter at Paris," sighed Fontaine, "but my duties keep me here, and when my vacation comes," he said consciously, "I am to remain a fort-

night with my friends, the MÉRARDS, at Petit-port, for the bathing season. Mademoiselle Léonie's health requires sea-bathing; she has not the physique of Mademoiselle Pauline at the Castle."

As he spoke, we had a vision of Mademoiselle Pauline herself in the distance, actively trudging alongside the canal. Monsieur Fontaine became very much excited as he pointed her out to us. She was followed by a maid-servant carrying a basket, and walking quietly, with long country footsteps, and wearing a white coiffe, a handkerchief across her shoulders, and a big apron with pockets. Her young mistress, unconscious of Fontaine's signals, sometimes hurried ahead, sometimes lagged behind to gather dock-leaves, branches of green, and marsh-mallows, of which she had made a sort of wreath, bound together by broad blades of grass. I could see the two heads passing between the willow stumps; some bird wheeled round overhead, and returned to its nest in a willow tree; some water-rat splashed from its hole at the root of an alder. The young person walking ahead hearing this splashing, stopped short and went down on her knees among the grasses; the maid-servant, who had long since outgrown the age of weasels and water-rats, and had matured to domestic interests, went on her way.

What a strange feeling it gives to write of all this that happened so long ago, vividly flashing before one's mind like the splash of the water-rat. I remember how the willows stood at intervals with their black stumpy stems, how all the purples and golds of the evening were reflected in the peat-stained water, shining in the green foliage and on the bricks of the old walls of the park.

"Mademoiselle!" said the Maire, politely stepping forward.

Pauline, still upon her knees, looked round into our faces while the Maire introduced us, and the water-rat darted away. She scrambled up; her dress was all dabbled with water, smeared with black earth, and also on fire with the evening light; so was her hair, which was oddly dressed in two twisted horns in the fashion of those days. There was something rude and honest about Mademoiselle Pauline which attracted me to her. She had a thick waist, country shoes; she wore a blue ribbon with a medal round her neck. She had pudgy red hands. She acknowledged Fontaine's elaborate introduction by squaring her elbows, with an awkward bob of the head which she had copied from her father. Then she turned and said to my uncle in tolerable English, "My papa and mama are at the house; will you come to see them?" and then she led the way without another word. There was a low door in the wall at which Pauline stopped, pushing with her shoulder and giving a violent jerk.

"Allow me, mademoiselle. You will hurt yourself," exclaimed Fontaine, quite shocked.

"Take care, my dear young lady," said uncle Joseph; "a small wedge inserted into the opening——"

But Pauline had burst open the door, and there was no more to be said. We all walked into the park, which was darkly overgrown, as

French parks are apt to be, but not without a certain dim charm of its own. Long vistas glimmered, and narrow avenues of trees ran in every direction. The great gates at the entrance of the chief avenue were half sunk into the earth; the ivies were clinging to the rusty hinges. The Court and its gay company had passed away, leaving it all to silence. For those who were to come after only a sign remained from the past generation to that which was to come—a stone with a herald's mark for us to note as we go by—some symbol of glories that are not quite over yet for impressionable people. And then we in turn hang up our trophies, names, and records, dumbly appealing for goodwill and sympathy to those who are to come after, and so we pass on our way. The maid walked first, then came Pauline swinging her arms, then followed my uncle and Fontaine of the springing step. The park led to an open space in front of the old house, and a terrace, upon which M. and Madame Fournier were seated enjoying the evening air. They had coffee-cups on the little green table between them. M. Fournier was in his shirt-sleeves, Madame Fournier's hair was neatly combed and arranged with many pins. She did not wear a cap, as do English matrons. She was like her daughter in appearance; but, although prettier, she had less expression. Neither she nor her husband troubled themselves about Henry IV. and his hunt. They put a large billiard table in the hall, set a maid to darn stockings in a window, placed a green-baize-covered piano exactly in the centre of the drawing-room, saw that the floor was polished, so that Pauline could slide from one end to the other in her chaussons, and prepared to enjoy the fruits of their many years' labour in peace. But there was still something to be done. Pauline, notwithstanding her short frocks, her scrambles, her tails of plaited hair, was eighteen, and of an age to marry. "His daughter's establishment occupies Fournier very anxiously," the Maire had already explained; "several propositions have been made, but he has his own ideas. Mademoiselle Pauline herself as yet only thinks of running wild. Hers is a wonderful activity!"

"She inherits it from her papa," Madame Fournier used to say. She was fat and lazy herself, and took her exercise chiefly in nodding from her chair; she would gladly have seen her daughter more like other girls, and used to protest placidly from the chimney-corner, "Would you believe it, Monsieur Fontaine, my daughter drags the roller unassisted for an hour a day! It is inconceivable."

"Excellent gymnastics, mama," says papa Fournier, cheerfully. "Don't you interfere with my course of hygiene."

Next time I walked up to the Château. I was amused to meet Pauline actively occupied, as her mother had described, dragging a huge roller over the grass. The young lady stopped on seeing me coming, wiped her brow, and sent a gardener for a glass of beer, which she tossed off at a draught. Her manners were not attractive at first sight, but one got used to them by degrees, and very soon Pauline and I had struck up a girlish intimacy.

She was a kind and warm-hearted girl, gentle enough in reality, although she seemed so abrupt and determined at first. She was dogmatic and conceited; she had a habit of telling long and prosy stories all about her own exploits and wonderful penetration, but this was only want of habit of the world. Her confidence in others made her a bore, perhaps, but it made one love her too. She had plenty of sympathy and intelligence. She had never read any books, or known anybody outside the walls of her home. It was a lonely life that she had lived, with the garden-roller and her dogs for playfellows, roaming within the gloomy gates of the park, or among the black fields and creeping waters that surrounded it. But she was happy enough; she was free to come and go as she liked. The tranquil commonplace of home was made dear to her by her father's trusting love; even her mother's placid jealousy was part of it all.

"Before my brother died," she said one day, "mama did not mind little things as she does now. That was years ago—before I can remember. I am the only child," she said, with a sigh, "and all their fortune is for me, they say. They have bought this big house for me; it is part of my *dot*; it was the de Mesnils' once." Then she shrugged her broad shoulders. "I shall be a great deal richer and in a much better position than Claudie de Measil, and yet I assure you Madame la Comtesse would scarcely allow her daughter to speak to me. She thinks people who are not noble are scarcely human beings. I am a good bourgeoisie, and I am not ashamed of it. I might like aristocrats better if they were more like Monsieur Maurice," said Pauline. "That day his mother was rude, and sent her daughter away from me when I spoke to her, he looked really sorry, and came up to mama to try and make up. I was nearly crying, but I would not let them see it. We had gone to offer that detestable woman the Château for the summer. She would not take it, so we left it shut up. Another year you might have it if you liked, and you must come and stay with me next week when your uncle goes back to Paris. You don't know me yet; but I know you, and I am sure we shall be good friends. Shake hands," and she held out her hand. It was very red and broad, but its grasp was cordial. "I will come and see you to-morrow, after breakfast. Is it true that Protestants fast every day but Sunday? I should not like that," says Pauline, making a horrible face. "I did not like the English till I knew you." Here, I suppose, I flushed up.

"Good morning," I said, very stiffly. "I might say just the contrary. I *did* like the French until——"

"Nonsense. You like me very much," said Pauline. "I shall come and see you to-morrow, after our breakfast."

I took my way along the canal, and she walked off under the trees, whistling and swinging her arms.

CHAPTER III.
AN INVENTORY.

I AFTERWARDS discovered that Pauline did these things a little out of bravado. She was not really vulgar, though she did vulgar things, and would swing her arms, rub her eyes, yawn in one's face in the most provoking manner at times. I have heard her exclaim, "Ah! bah!" just as the peasants did down in the village. This was what she said when her father told her one day that an uncle of M. de Mesnil, an old bachelor living in Paris, had, upon some general expression of Monsieur Fournier's goodwill towards the young dispossessed proprietor of the Château, asked him pointblank what he would say in the event of Maurice de Mesnil coming forward as a suitor for the hand of Mademoiselle Fournier.

"There! that is just like you," cried Madame Fournier, strangely flustered for her. "You tell one this when it is too late; you never consult me, never say one word till the whole thing has blown over. Pauline, I don't know whether you or your father is the most childish and incapable. I have no doubt, M. Fournier, you never gave any answer at all!"

"I gave an answer," said Fournier, gravely.

"Well!" said Madame Fournier, "what did you say?"

Fournier shrugged his shoulders. "It was absurd," said he; "that was what I said. If they had not been so unfortunate, I might have told them that their suggestion seemed an impertinence."

"An impertinence, papa," said Pauline. "M. Maurice never would be impertinent. He knew nothing about it. I could not have believed you to be so prejudiced," and she suddenly leaped over a little rail that happened to be in her way, and walked off. Madame Fournier looked after her. When Fournier spoke again, his wife answered him so sharply for her, that I thought it more discreet to leave the worthy couple to themselves. I could not find Pauline anywhere in the park, but on my way back to the house I met Fournier walking thoughtfully along with his hands in his pockets.

"Have you not found Pauline?" he asked. "Has she run off? Are you not great friends, you two? My little Pauline," he went on, speaking to himself; "she is a treasure. Whoever wins her will have found a treasure. Her mother would have her different—a fine lady; not so would I. She is true and innocent and courageous, and tender to those who belong to her home. I am thankful to have so good a child." And so he walked on.

Presently someone came up from behind and caught me round the neck with a sudden pair of arms.

"You never saw me, you little blind creature," cries Pauline. "I have been peeping at you from behind the bushes. You looked so nice

there! Come—papa shall take us in the punt; that is a good bourgeois way of getting about. I saw him just now waiting down by the water-side." And there surely enough stood Monsieur Fournier, looking abstractedly across the canal at the willow stumps opposite.

It was in the punt, as we were sliding along the waters, with the lovely autumn gold lighting the dark banks, with the green leaves floating on the water and insects droning sleepily, and a sweet fragrance in the air, and a faint aroma of distant peat-fields, that M. Fournier said to his daughter, "Tell me, Pauline, is your mother right? Would you like me to think seriously of young de Mesnil for your husband?"

"I like him very much, papa," said Pauline, very composedly. "I would not wish to influence you or my mother, as I am sure you can judge far better than I can. But if you ask me my wishes, I should certainly be glad that you should consider M. de Mesnil's proposition."

I opened my eyes in amazement. Was this—was this the way in which a maiden yielded her heart? Were they serious? They were quite serious, and went on discussing the subject until the boat ran aground. Then we had to clamber up the banks and run home in the twilight, under the trees.

When Pauline asked me to spend a fortnight with her after my uncle's return to Paris, I had gladly consented, for I was sincerely interested by my new friend. From some hints of Monsieur Fontaine's, I had imagined that under the circumstances my presence might be thought out of place, but they assured me that I was welcome, and Madame Fournier kindly insisted.

"We are glad, miss," she said, "that our Pauline should be cheered and distracted by the presence of one of her own age. You young people understand one another." When it was thus decided that I should stay on with Pauline Fournier, the respite was very welcome to me. We had all been very happy in the little village, and not one of us but felt sorry that the time was come to leave it.

The good farmers' wives had welcomed us hospitably, the labouring women had grunted a greeting as they trudged home with their loads, so did their little children along the road; Jacques from the mill, Jean from the farm, were all our acquaintances—the Laitière at her door, the friendly old grocers opposite the church.

I remember that one day a travelling organ came round to Visy, and was for half the day in the market-place grinding its tunes. The people inside the church could hear it. The old grocer's little granddaughters stood in the shop-door dancing and practising their steps; they were pretty little pensionnaires from the convent, with blue ribbons and medals like Pauline's tied round their necks. The old couple looked on, nodding their heads in time to the children.

"They are beginning early," said the old lady, proudly; "they will be ready for the St. Côme." The St. Côme was an annual dance at Estournelles hard by, to which the whole village was looking forward. . .

Our lease had come to an end, and the house had to be given up to Madame Valmy, its rightful owner. A very grim-looking maid-servant came to receive the keys, and to take possession. All our own boxes and parcels were carried out through the garden, and placed ready in the road for the little omnibus. It ran daily past our gate at ten o'clock, and caught the early train to Paris from Corbeil. My luggage, however, was kept distinct from the family penates, and was piled up on a wheelbarrow, for the gardener to convey to the Château in the course of the morning.

I do not think I have described the Pavilion, as our house was called, now standing empty in the sunshine awaiting the return of its owner. Madame Valmy had put up at the little inn for the night, and was not to come in till the following day; but this maid-servant, Julienne, as they called her, had appeared early in the morning to go over the inventory, and to receive the keys from me, the only survivor of our cheerful colony. Julienne was not a pleasant person to have to do with. She was stout and pale, with a heavy sulky face. She seemed constantly suspecting me of some sinister purpose as she walked over the house, counted the inventory, and asked for the rent. Monsieur Fontaine had the rent. He had promised to get change for a cheque and to bring the amount, but Julienne did not seem to believe me when I told her so. The house stood at right angles between a garden and a courtyard; the drawing-room windows opened into the garden, the door of the house led to the courtyard; the courtyard opened into a side street of the village, so that there were two distinct entrances to the house. People calling generally came through the court where the bell hung under a little tiled roof all to itself; but it was quite easy to open the garden gate if you knew the trick of the latch, and to come in by the drawing-room windows. An iron gateway, and wreathed by a vine, divided the courtyard from the garden. This door was always locked, besides which the vine had travelled on and on and bound the hinges and the iron scrolls together. I was standing in the courtyard that morning still talking to Julienne and trying to divert her many suspicions, when some shadow fell upon me, and turning round I saw that someone was looking at me through the grating. It was the figure of a slim woman in a pink dress, with a very bright complexion. In one hand she held a green parasol. She laid her white fingers upon the lock. "Madame, you know very well that there is no getting through that way," said Julienne. The woman's voice was singularly rough and yet distinct. As she spoke the figure disappeared. I don't know what it was that impressed me so disagreeably in both maid and mistress. It is difficult not to believe in some atmosphere which strangers coming into a place often feel, although they may not always understand it. Meanwhile Julienne went on with her investigations. "Where are the chests off the landing?" said she. "We put them out of the way," I answered. "You will find them in the little cellar off the dining-room." The house-keeper was not satisfied until she had lighted a candle, descended the

three stone steps that led to the cellar, and examined the locks, to make sure they had not been tampered with. "There is another cellar beyond," said she, "but it is full of good wine, and we did not give you the key."

I was not sorry when Pauline interrupted our *tête-à-tête*; she had goodnaturedly come off to fetch me. "Here you are, miss," she said. "I have been to the station with papa. I saw your uncle and your cousins go off, and now you belong to me for ever so long;" and she took my hands in hers and shook them cordially. Her eyes looked very bright, and her hair very curly. "Well, have you nearly done? can you come with me? How are you? How is your mistress, Julianne, and when is the wedding to be?"

Julianne answered drily that she never asked questions, and that if people were curious they had better enquire for themselves. Pauline turned away with the family shrug. "The longer it is put off the better pleased I shall be," she said. "I can't imagine how she can think of him. The English are so ridiculous. I wouldn't marry an Englishman."

I was little more than a schoolgirl, and my temper was already roused. "I think it is very rude, and unkind, and inhospitable of you, if you are my friend, to talk in this dreadful way," I cried, almost with tears in my eyes. "The English are not ridiculous, they are a noble——"

"Do you really mind what I say," said Pauline, taking my hand. "Please, my dear friend, forgive me," and she looked at me full of concern, so that I was obliged to laugh.

Then, as soon as she had made sure I had forgiven her she walked out of the house. Pauline did not look round to see whether I had followed her out, pushed open the door of the courtyard, and marched out into the street. She was very rude at times, and made me more angry than anybody else, but she was so kind and feeling too that I always forgave her. My own cousins were gay, gentle, friendly in manner; she was either quite silent, or she would talk by the hour. She was alternately dull and indifferent and boisterous in her mirth; she was by way of hating affectation, and of thinking everybody affected; in order to show how sincere she was, she seemed to go out of her way to invent rudenesses. She was not even pretty. She might have had a good complexion but for her freckles; a pretty smile and white teeth seemed to be her only attraction. As I have said, she generally wore an ill-made green frock, country shoes, and coarse knitted stockings. Till she was sixteen she had persisted in keeping her petticoats half up to her knees, with black stuff trousers, such as girls wore in those days, and a black stuff apron and sleeves to match.

"No," said Pauline, again, "I cannot think how my pretty delightful Madame Valmy can think of marrying your Capitaine Thomsonne, or how she can keep that horrid Julianne in her service."

As she spoke we were passing Fontaine's house, and his head appeared for one instant in a window; the next minute he had hurried into the road to greet us. "Are you aware that Madame Valmy is come?" he

said, in great excitement. "I have just seen *Le Capitaine*, who seems a little suffering. But our fine air will set him up. I am immediately starting to pay my respects to Madame. I hope, *Mademoiselle Pauline*, with your leave, that our musical evenings at the *Château* will now recommence, the *prima donna* being among us once more. To-morrow I am engaged upon business for my friend *Monsieur Méréard*, but Thursday we might all combine perhaps."

"I will let you know," said *Pauline*. "We may be busy." She spoke with some constraint. The *Maire* gave one rapid glance.

It is strange what a part in life the things play which never happen. We think of them and live for them, and they form a portion of our history, and while we are still absorbed in these imaginary dreams the realities of our lives meet us on the way, and we suddenly awaken to the truth at last. *Pauline* thought that her fate was being decided, and that by Thursday all secret destinies were to be unravelled; no wonder that she was silent as we walked along.

CHAPTER IV.

MADemoiselle PAULINE'S MARRIAGE PORTION.

WHEN the *Comte de Mesnil* fell into that hopeless condition from which he never rallied, but sank after some months of illness, it was found that his affairs were in utter confusion. He had kept his difficulties secret even from his wife. It was impossible to tell whether this impending ruin had produced the mental disturbance from which he was suffering, or whether the ruin had not been partly owing to some secret want of balancing power; for his extravagance had been almost without a limit. The Countess had tried in the first years of their marriage to interfere; but for long past had forborne to blame her husband or to enquire into his affairs. She herself had drawn largely upon his resources. To do him justice, the Count was indifferent to money for its own sake, and had only been anxious that everyone should be as comfortable as circumstances might admit. Unfortunately one day came when circumstances no longer admitted of any comfort for anybody. The Count's creditors seized his great house in Paris; the sheriff's officers were in possession; the whole magnificent apparatus of damask, and crystal, and china was to be disposed of by public auction. And the unfortunate Countess, who was more difficult to dispose of, was sitting, silent, resentful, and offended beyond words or the power of words, in a temporary lodging which her son had taken for her use. She had a daughter also, an amiable and gentle girl, who tried in vain to console her, for Madame de Mesnil looked upon all attempts at consolation as insults. We have seen how she treated *M. Fontaine*. Maurice her son, now *Comte de Mesnil* in his own right, had suggested their all going into the country, and trying to live as economically as might be upon what might remain to them; but even this moderate scheme was not to be carried

out. The estate at Visy remained, but there was scarcely anything left besides, and the only thing to be done was to sell that too and to live upon the proceeds of the sale. The one piece of good fortune which befell this unfortunate family was the advent of a purchaser for the estate. This was our friend Fournier, who was willing to pay a fair price for the land and the old house upon it. He produced certain sums of money representing a great deal of good sense, hard work, and self-denial, and received in return the estate which the late Count's folly and self-indulgence had thrown into the market.

Maurice had several interviews with the old manufacturer—ventured to make one or two suggestions about the management of the property, which had been very ill received by his late father, but which nevertheless were, in Fournier's opinion, worth considering. Something in the young Count's manner, his courtesy and simplicity of bearing, impressed the old man in his favour. Fournier thought himself no bad judge of character, and after that little talk with Pauline he made up his mind. He cared less for money than people usually do who have not earned it. It seemed to him that there were other things wanting besides money to make his girl happy in her marriage. "This young fellow is clear-headed, modest, ready to occupy himself intelligently; he will make an excellent landlord. My wife has a fancy to see a countess's coronet on her daughter's pocket-handkerchief. Pauline might do worse," he said to Fontaine. "I am going to Paris to-morrow to speak to the Baron. That is an old fox if you like, but I like the young man."

"I have known Maurice from his childhood," said Fontaine, solemnly (so he told me afterwards); "he is a gallant man, incapable of a dishonourable action. I will answer for him with my word and——"

"Good, good, good," says Fournier, who hated phrases. "I daresay he is very like other people; it will be a good business for him. My Pauline, and my rent-roll, and my share in the factory—it is not a bad bargain he will make."

It was the very day I went up to stay at the house that Fournier came back from Paris, having concluded this solemn affair.

We had been walking in the park, in silence, for Pauline seemed absent, and for once she did not care to go on with her usual somewhat long-winded histories. There is a little mound near the terrace from whence one can see the road winding between its poplars, the great fields lying one beyond the other, some golden with corn, others black with peat and with smoking heaps, of which the vapours drifted along the horizon. "There is my father coming," cried Pauline suddenly, and she started running along the avenue, and came up to M. Fournier just at the entrance gate by the poplar-trees, of which all the shadows seemed to invite the passing wayfarers to come in and rest. I followed, running too, because Pauline ran. I am afraid it showed small discretion on my part.

"Well, Pauline," said her father kindly, stopping to breathe. Then he turned to me. "How do you do, miss? I am glad to see you."

"Where have you been, papa; what have you been about?" Pauline said, after a minute of silence.

"I have had a hard day's work in your service," he answered. "I have been to call upon M. le Baron de Beaulieu, upon Madame la Comtesse de Mesnil," said the father, stroking her cheek with his finger. "I have been working for you, mademoiselle. I hope it is all for the best," he repeated, with a sigh. "Mr. Maurice seems a fine young fellow. I do not like the mother."

"Don't you, papa?" said Pauline, absently; and she stooped and pulled up a handful of grass, which she then blew away into the air.

"To be Madame la Comtesse is small comfort where hearts are cold, and the home an empty lonely place," said Fournier. "Well, well, the young man is coming here as you wish. You must see him and make up your mind. I don't think he can ever learn how to love you, my child, as well as your old father does." Fournier was very gentle and sad, and he went on swinging his stick, and said no more. I lingered behind and watched the father and daughter walk away together, up the avenue towards the house, trudging along side by side, looking strangely alike. When I came in Pauline was not to be seen. M. Fournier was sitting reading the paper in his usual corner. Madame Fournier met me on the stairs; I think she had been crying. She stopped me. "Do not go to Pauline just yet," she said; "she is agitated, dear child—she — we —. Monsieur Fournier has decided. I have been very happy myself," she added, with a tender look in her flushed red face; "I should like my child to know such happiness. M. de Mesnil is coming here to-morrow."

They were good and worthy people. I was glad to be with them.

I was happy enough up at the Château, but I could imagine that for a young man it might seem rather monotonous at times. Maurice used to think it almost unbearably so in his father's time, and secretly hated the place. One cannot reason out every motive which prompts each human action. Sufficient be it if the sum, on the whole, drives the impulse rightly. Perhaps it had been no great sacrifice to the young man to hear that the cruel fates had exiled him from this dreary, familiar, wearisome old home, and that he was to return thither no more. Long after he confessed everything to Pauline; and the dismay he felt when his mother sent for him, and with happy agitation told him of the wonderful chance by which, if he was so inclined, the old home might return to its ancient possessors, to the owners whose right she still considered greater than that of mere purchase. As Maurice heard for the first time of his uncle's suggestion and Fournier's acquiescence, his heart only sank lower and lower; his mother's delight and eager exclamations sounded like a knell to his hopes. "And now, now," cried the poor lady, exulting, "I shall not die with the bitter pang in my heart that your father's was the hand which exiled my son from the home to which he had a right; now," she

said, "my life will close peacefully, reassured for my children's fate. My daughter need not fear the future. Your home will be hers at my death. I have not deserved so much; it makes up to me for my life of anxious sorrow," said the poor lady, bursting into tears, and covering her face with her hands. Poor Maurice knew not how to answer. His heart went on sinking and sinking; it had leapt up at the prospect of liberty, of hard work, of change, of independence. He had behaved very well; but he had been doing as he liked for the first time in all his life, and now more firmly than ever did the fetters seem rivetted which were to bind him down to Visy. The black canals seemed to rise and rise and choke him; the dreary old gables seemed to weigh upon his very soul. For a few moments he stood silent, making up his mind. He was trying to frame the sentence by which to explain to his mother what he felt.

"There is much to be considered," he was beginning. Then she raised her head; her entreating eyes met his, she put up her thin hands.

"Oh, my son!" she said. "Do you think I sacrifice nothing when I give you up to strangers, that my mother's pride does not suffer at the thought of this cruel necessity? My Maurice, you have been my consolation and my courage; and oh, believe me, my son, you will never regret the impulse which makes you yield to your mother's prayer. Think what my life has been, think of the sorrows I have hidden from my children. Ah! do not condemn me to that renewed penance; I have no more strength for it." She put her arms round his neck with tender persistence. Her wasted looks, her tears, and above all her tenderness, which he had so often longed for as a child, and which had been so rarely expressed, overcame the poor kind-hearted young fellow's faint effort at resistance. He turned very pale, his lips seemed quite dry and parched, and something seemed to impede his speech as he said, "Very well. Since you wish it, I will consent. The sooner it is all settled the better, I suppose." He shook off little Claudine, who came coaxing up to him with innocent congratulations. He scarcely answered his uncle's long speeches and elaborations, when the Baron arrived in his black satin stock, prepared to undertake any negotiations. Three days later, Maurice went down to Visy. From a French point of view, the whole thing was a highly desirable and honourable proceeding. M. le Comte de Mesnil arrived in a dogged and determined state of mind, prepared to go through with the dreary farce.

CHAPTER V.

MADemoiselle PAULINE'S INTENDED HUSBAND.

It must have seemed like a sort of mockery to poor Maurice to see the familiar chairs in the hall, to hear the well-known tick of the old clock in the great salon, and to be solemnly announced to the company assembled at the Château—M. Fournier, Madame Fournier, Pauline with her Sunday frock, and Fontaine the friend of the family, who had been

invited to break the formality of this first introduction. M. de Mesnil was a youth of the usual type, with honest grey eyes, not unlike Pauline's. He was pale, slight, distinguished in manner and appearance—a contrast to the worthy master of the house, in which M. Fournier certainly seemed to me very much out of place. Pauline looked very pale, too, very clumsy, but noble, somehow, notwithstanding her plaid frock and her twists. Maurice was perfectly quiet and conventional, bowed with his hat in his hand, expressed his gratitude for the invitation he had received, sat down in a company attitude upon the old armchair against which he had so often knocked his nose as a child. He took Madame Fournier into dinner, Pauline sat on his other hand. They had a melon, soup, sweetbreads, a gigot, with a plated handle to carve it by; a round tart, cream-cheese, and champagne for dessert. "The dinner was excellent, but Maurice certainly did not distinguish himself," the Maire observed. "I did my best, but conversation languished."

For the first few days M. de Mesnil was busy with his father-in-law going over the estate and the business connected with it, and while he had work to do, Maurice seemed comparatively resigned; but when, on the third morning, M. Fournier told him to go in and make himself agreeable to his wife and daughter, Maurice felt the old dismay return tenfold. He had little in common with the ladies. He might respect Pauline, but he was certainly afraid of her; and as for making himself agreeable, nothing seemed left for him to do but wander rapidly about from one room to another, or to saunter along the terrace with Pauline and with Madame Fournier, who conscientiously and laboriously chaperoned the couple. One day I found him yawning in the hall, and watching the darning of stockings. Another day he assisted Pauline with the garden-roller. Pauline was a curiously determined person. She would not give up one of her pursuits for any number of aspirants. "Let them come, too," said she, "if they want to see me." Some horrible dulness overpowered Maurice; a nightmare seemed to be upon the place, and Pauline was only a part of it, and so was everything else. Formerly he used to have schemes for benefiting the tenants, now he no longer wished to benefit anybody. Once it seemed to him want of funds which prevented his efforts—now it was some strange inability to do and care and to interest himself which had come over him: they had taken his liberty away, condemned him to a life he was weary of. He did not care what happened.

He took us out in a punt one day; and I remember when we ran aground it was Pauline, not Maurice, who sprang into the water and pushed us off.

Madame Fournier screamed. M. Fournier only laughed. Pauline, shaking her wet clothes, said it was nothing. However, she conceded something to de Mesnil's well-bred concern, and went back to the house to change her wet things. Maurice would have accompanied her, but his father-in-law called him back,

"Let her be, let her be! She will be quicker without you. We shall meet her at the little bridge." Then we went on our way again in the punt, rather a silent party. The banks slide by, so do the stumps, and the willow rods starting from among the upspringing weeds, and grasses and water-plants stream upon the waters. How dark and blue the sky looked overhead, studding the pale green of the willow-trees!

"That naughty child!" said Madame Fournier. "She will get some frightful illness one day if she is not more careful. I am glad you persuaded her to change her wet things, M. Maurice. She would not have done it for me."

"In my time," said old Fournier, "it was the young men, not the young women, who jumped into the water. You have certainly not brought your daughter up to think of the *bienséances*, Louise."

"It is not my doing, Monsieur Fournier," said his wife, reddening. "You would never allow me to hold her back. How many times have I not——"

"Good, good, good!" cries M. Fournier, in his irritated voice. "This is the hundredth time you tell me all this."

I saw Maurice bite his lip while this discussion was going on. He did not speak; he continued to work the long pole by which we were shoved along; the boat steadily progressed, rounded the point, came out into a sudden glow of light, air, sunshine. There was the bridge, there was a sight of the old house with its many windows. Three figures were standing by the bridge. Pauline herself, still in her wet clothes, a short little gentleman with a moustache, and a tall lady waving a green parasol.

"Who is it?" says Fournier, blinking.

"Why, here is Madame Valmy!" cried Madame Fournier, quite pleased, and bristling up with conscious maternal excitement at the news she had to give. "And Pauline——"

Mademoiselle Fournier turned and nodded to us. She was wet, soiled, splashed from head to foot. She was talking eagerly to the friends she had encountered, to the flourishing little gentleman, to the elegant lady, curled, trimmed, cool, in perfect order, who seemed to me to give a sarcastic little glance every now and then at poor Pauline's drenched garments. Fournier called out very angrily again, why had she waited, why had she not gone home?

"I am going, papa. They did not know the way," shouted Pauline. And she set off, running and swinging her arms as she went along. Then Fournier, rather reluctantly I thought, greeted his guests. Madame Valmy was invited into the punt by Madame Fournier.

"Get in, if you like," said Fournier. "There will be room enough. You can take my place. I will show the captain my new hydraulic pump, if he will walk across with me to the stables."

It was a curious change of atmosphere when, with a rustle and a gentle half-toned laugh, Madame Valmy stepped into the broad boat, and settled herself down beside me. I saw Maurice looking at her with

some surprise. She was smiling. To-day she wore a blue gown, and falling muslin sleeves and ruffles. She held her ivory parasol daintily in one mitted hand; she laughed, talked, seemed at once to become one with us all. It was certainly a great relief to the poor young Count to meet this fascinating, agreeable, fashionable person in his somewhat wearisome Arcadia. His eyes brightened, some change came over him; and Madame Sidonie herself, as she liked to be called, appeared greatly interested by the melancholy, pale, romantic looks of M. de Mesnil. She opened her eyes, seemed to understand everything in a minute, and I could read her amused surprise that Pauline, of all people in the world, should have discovered such a husband. Nothing would content Madame Fournier but that Madame Valmy should return to the Château with us. The two gentlemen were pacing the terrace and tranquilly discussing pumps. Pauline came to meet us along the avenue, and all the fragrant darkness seemed to me like a tide rising among the stems of the trees. The house-door was open wide. The hall was lighted with two oil lamps; a tray with various cordials and glasses stood on the billiard-table.

"Come in and rest," said Pauline. "Won't you have some beer, instead of all this?"

Madame Valmy laughed and shrank back; Pauline tossed off a glass; and Fontaine now appeared from within; he had been tuning his fiddle in the drawing-room, and the candles were already lighted on the piano.

Although Madame Valmy refused the beer, she accepted a glass of chartreuse, and then consented to open the concert, and to sit down at the piano, and to sing a romance which made Maurice thrill again. It was something about—

Je suis triste—je voudrais mou-ri-re,
Car j'ai perdue—ue, mon ami,
La la la li-re.

When she had finished, M. le Maire accompanied Mademoiselle Fournier on his violin all through an immensely long piece of music, so difficult that he declared no amateur would ever be able to master it, and during the performance of which the Intended was busy paying compliments and whispering remarks to the songstress. My attention wandered away to the two as they sat on the big couch by the window, while the Maire went on from one agonising passage to another, beating time with his foot, running frantic scales, and poor Pauline, with her elbows squared, was banging away at the piano, and rumbling in the bass so as to imitate thunder. She had put on a dress, with two frills sticking up on the shoulders. Her mouth was open, her eyes fixed on her music, her tight bronze shoes hard at work at the pedals. Madame Fournier was in her chair delightedly nodding time. M. Fournier in the distance reading the paper by the light of a lamp with a green shade. M. de Mesnil looked away from his bride and her surroundings to the charming lady who was glancing so archly at him over her waving fan. No wonder if he sighed and thought, perhaps, that honest Pauline was not exactly the idea which

a young man would dream of at his start in life—the sympathetic being who, &c. &c. &c. But meanwhile squeak-eak goes the fiddle, bang, rumble, bang goes Pauline, and Sidonie Valmy's deep eyes are glancing, her glittering fan waves faintly, her silence says a thousand things, her smiles sing siren songs, and the foolish young man is sinking, sinking, head over ears in the deep water.

CHAPTER VI.

MADAME VALMY.

AFTER all these romances and minor chords, my conversation with Madame Valmy that night before she went home seemed rather a come down to commonplace again. She came up very graciously to speak to me as I sat in my corner. She seemed in high spirits, with pink cheeks blushing.

"I am now at home, and I have to thank your uncle for the rent which he left with M. Fontaine," she said. "My maid, Julienne, who is very difficult to please, tells me that your servants have left everything in excellent condition. She begged me to ask," said Madame, with a charming smile, "if you happened to know anything of the key of the door to the recess in the dining-room. We keep our provisions there, the place is so cool and dark—I am giving so much trouble, but Therese is dreadfully particular . . ."

De Mesnil prepared to walk home with our visitors across the park. Pauline said she should also like to accompany them. It was quite dark, but she came back alone whistling and calling to her dog.

"I sent him on to the village, mama," she said, in answer to Madame Fournier's glance. "Mary is coming with me for another stroll." She took my hand and held it tight in hers. As we walked out into the evening once more everything looked weird and shadowy, but the last twilight gleam was still in the sky. Pauline did not look up; she was thinking of other things, her heart was full and she wanted to speak; she suddenly began in a low moved voice. "Ah!" she said, "what a great responsibility is another person's happiness! How do I know that I can make him happy? Of what use would it be to me to be Madame la Comtesse? Of what use would the park, and all the trees, and the houses and furniture, and all my money, be to M. Maurice if he was not happy? I am foolish," she said. "I don't know what I want. Mama had only seen my father once when she agreed to marry him. Maurice is so different. His habits are not like mine. Oh! I think I could not, could not bear it, if I thought he was unhappy with me. But my father and mother must know better than I can do. They have judged wisely for me in their tender affection, and I can abide by their decision."

We had come to the gate in the wall; it had been left wide open; I passed out and looked out across the fields.

"Do you see him coming?" said Pauline. "Shall we wait here a little bit?"

We waited a very long time, but Maurice did not come. It was not till I was undressed that I heard the hall-door unbarred, and M. Fournier's voice as he let the young man in.

It was a hot sultry night, and I could not sleep. I went to the window of my room, which looked out at the back of the house into the park. A sort of almost supernatural sweetness seemed brooding from the vaguely illumined sky, where one great dewy planet hung sparkling. The other stars were dimmed by this wonderful radiance. The cattle were out in the dark fields beyond the trees, and from time to time I heard them lowing. The sound came distinct, and sounded melodious, somehow, and reassuring. Everything was still and very hot. Strange vaporous things whirled past me in the darkness. Moths beat their gauzy sails. Was it a bat's wing that flapped across the beautiful star, as I leant from the window, breathing in the fragrant perfume of some creeper that was nailed against the wall? I could see a line of light from Pauline's window, shooting out into the darkness. Then I saw, vaguely at first, and then more distinctly, some shadowy movement among the flower-beds at the end of the paved terrace. Then the shadow seemed to gain in substance and form, and the sound of slow falling footsteps reached me. I was only a girl, and superstitious still in those days, and for a moment my heart beat fast. But almost immediately I recognised something familiar in the movement which told me that it was the very substantial figure of M. Fournier that was wandering in and out and round and about the little flower-beds. It seemed to me a strange proceeding on his part, for it was not the beauty of the night which attracted him. As he passed my window, he seemed to me muttering angrily to himself. "Que diable!" I heard him say. Then I went to sleep, and awoke with a start, still listening to the wandering footsteps. After all his talk about early hours, here was M. Fournier himself restlessly pacing the night away.

Captain Thompson was very much occupied just about this time. He was winding up some affairs connected with another peat factory which he had started at Estournelles. He used to be absent all day, and only came in late in time for dinner. He was not there to turn over Madame Valmy's pages as she sat at her piano on the hot autumnal afternoons, but somehow de Mesnil was always ready to do her errands, or to wait her orders. Pauline was not a severe taskmistress, and never attempted to keep him by her side when he wished to go.

Monsieur Fontaine, who did not deny having been himself very much attracted by the lovely widow, shook his head solemnly, and disapproved exceedingly of her flirtation with Maurice de Mesnil. Rarer and rarer were the accompaniments his fiddle scraped to Madame Valmy's love ditties, but the songstress somehow thrilled on. Day after day de Mesnil would come sauntering down the street, and stop and go

in at the gateway of the Pavilion, and the performance would presently begin, and the music would come floating across the court.

Pauline herself was an odd mixture of simplicity and shrewdness, and she went about loudly professing her admiration for the son-in-law her father had chosen. De Mesnil's refinement, his gentleness, impressed the brusque young bourgeoisie with a certain shy admiring respect. She declared that he was too good for her, that he was throwing himself away; that she expected some obstacle must intervene. She was a girl of singular frankness—she never said a word that was not truth itself. She hated exaggeration; she had no sense of humour; her frankness was sometimes objectionable, her remarks stupid and ill-timed, and yet, in common with all conscientious persons, there was a certain force of character about her which impressed those who came in contact with her. Her mother always ended by succumbing; her father, from whom she inherited this turn of mind, generally ended by giving in to her wishes.

It was not to be supposed that if Fontaine's eyes were open hers were closed, and that if the Maire had commented upon what was passing she too did not suffer some natural pangs of jealousy.

Fontaine thought it his duty to speak to M. Fournier on the subject—so he told me confidentially; but the retired manufacturer stopped him at once.

"I have promised Pauline not to interfere for the present," said he; "I can trust her good sense. You will be helping me most effectually by saying no more on this subject to me or to anyone else."

"Of course I can only respect his wishes," said Fontaine; and so I told Mademoiselle Pauline, and so M. Fontaine told me whenever an opportunity occurred.

The key which Madame Valmy had asked me for was not to be found. My cousin wrote, and Pauline and I went one day to the village locksmith, and ordered another in its place.

"Madame Valmy's Julianne has already been here to tell me to make one," said Leroux, the locksmith. "She desired me to send you the account."

Madame Coqueau, the locksmith's mother-in-law, who was the village newsmonger, here chimed in. "The Captain's cider and champagne had arrived," she said; "no wonder they were in want of a key; and that Julianne, for all her grim airs, was as fond of a bottle of good wine as others with half her pretensions."

Madame Coqueau evidently shared my dislike to Julianne. Pauline and I said good-bye to Madame Coqueau, good-day to the Curé, whom we passed. We were walking home leisurely up the street, chattering and looking about; I had just asked where the Captain was living, when we passed a low white house, covered with a trellis.

"This is his house," said Pauline, "and that is the Doctor's opposite."

Then we came to the gates of the Pavilion, which were open, for Captain Thompson was crossing the courtyard from the house. He was

looking very smiling and trim as usual. He took off his hat when he saw us, stopped, and came up to Pauline, saying—

"I was just going in search of a good-natured person, mademoiselle. Would you consent to do me a favour? Fongtaine has been drawing up a paper for me. Sidonie can't sign, because she is interested. We want someone to witness my signature, and if you young ladies would be so kind as to come in for one minute, everything would be en reggel. This is very good of you," as he stood by to let us pass. We went up the steps and past the kitchen. Juliette was standing at the door with a saucepan in her hand. Pauline said "Good morning," but Juliette did not answer. She looked as if she would have liked to throw her saucepan at our heads. I could not imagine what we had done to vex her.

"You must not mind her," said Captain Thompson, as we came into the dining-room. "She is in one of her ill-humours. Only Sidonie, who is sweetness itself, would put up with her. She is rude to everyone. She positively refused to witness for us just now, and that is why I have to trouble you, ladies." Then he opened the drawing-room door and ushered us in. Sidonie, in her sweetest temper and blue trimmings, was installed in her big soft chair by the window. She seemed unprepared for our appearance, but her embarrassment did not last.

"Well, Sid! here are some witnesses," said the Captain; "now we shall get the business settled."

A huge foolscap lay on the table, emblazoned in Gothic letters with "Will of Captain J. Beauvoir Thompson, of Amphlett Hall, Lancaster." M. Fontaine was writing something at a side-table. He waved his hand to us and went on.

Captain Thompson went up and read over Fontaine's shoulder, while I looked round in some surprise. Was this the room we had lived in for so many months? It seemed transformed into some strange place. The furniture was differently arranged, dark blinds had been put up in the windows, mirrors hung from the walls; bonbon boxes, footstools were scattered all about, huge japan pots stood on the chimney; some sense of enclosure had come over the place; there was a faint scent of patchouli, a log was smouldering in the grate. The homely country fragrance of the vines and the garden-beds had pleased me better on the whole.

"There," said the Captain, as Fontaine finished. "Thank you, Fongtaine, and now, in case of anything happening to me between this and the weddin', I shall feel sure that you won't be put upon, my poor little woman. I know I'm absurd, but——" he walked across to where Madame Valmy was sitting.

She did not notice him at first. "Why do you persist in dwelling upon such dreadful thoughts?" said she, starting up suddenly with a glance at Pauline; "why trouble yourself about me; I should manage somehow, anyhow, as I did before I knew you. What should I want else if I had not my foolish, foolish——"

Here she pulled out her handkerchief.

"There, there, don't cry, dear; it is all nonsense," said he. "You

get anxious, you silly child," and his voice softened. "Why, it was something you said yourself last night which put it all into my head. It is only a fancy. I shan't die any the sooner for writing my name upon a piece of paper."

As he walked back to the table, the door opened and Julianne looked in. He was deliberately writing his name with a flourish; Madame Valmy was watching him, and I, looking up, saw Julianne's strange eyes reflected in the glass. Then Pauline witnessed the signature; and as she, too, suddenly met this strange fixed glance she turned pale.

"What is it, Julianne?" said she. "Why do you look at me like that?"

Julianne gave no answer, but walked away.

Madame Valmy began to laugh, rather hysterically. "I don't know what is the matter with Julianne," said she; "she seems to have a horror of business. I myself am rather interested in it."

"Business! Sid thinks she understands about business!" said the Captain, fondly. "Shall I tell Fontaine what a confusion you had got into, poor child, when you first consulted me? Think of her trying to speculate at the Bourse."

Madame Valmy, with burning cheeks, was evidently vexed by the conversation, and the good Captain saw this and became serious at once.

"Thank'ee, thank'ee," he said, folding up the slips and putting them neatly away in his despatch-box.

The incident was slight enough, but it made an impression on me. I remembered his kind look afterwards.

"You English," said Fontaine, gathering up his hat and gloves; "you are a generous, impulsive race. I am sure, M. le Capitaine, that Madame Valmy must be touched by your care for her."

"Nonsense, nonsense," said the Captain. "Sid makes a great deal out of nothing. Now then, Julianne and I are going to put by the cider. I believe that is the real secret of her impatience this morning. Good-bye, thank you," he repeated.

Madame also accompanied us to the door, waving farewells. She embraced Pauline, who seemed to me less demonstrative than she had usually been to her friend. She did not say a single word as we walked away. At the end of the village street, by the church, we met Maurice walking down.

"Were you coming to meet us?" Pauline asked, brightening up when she saw him.

He looked at her gravely, and said, "No, I was not, but I will walk back with you if you will allow me."

He and Pauline went first; I followed. I could not help, as I went along, speculating about Madame Valmy and her feeling for the Captain. It seemed to me that it was *Fontaine* who had been touched by the Captain's affection for Madame Valmy, far more than that lady herself, for she certainly was not crying when she pulled out her handkerchief.

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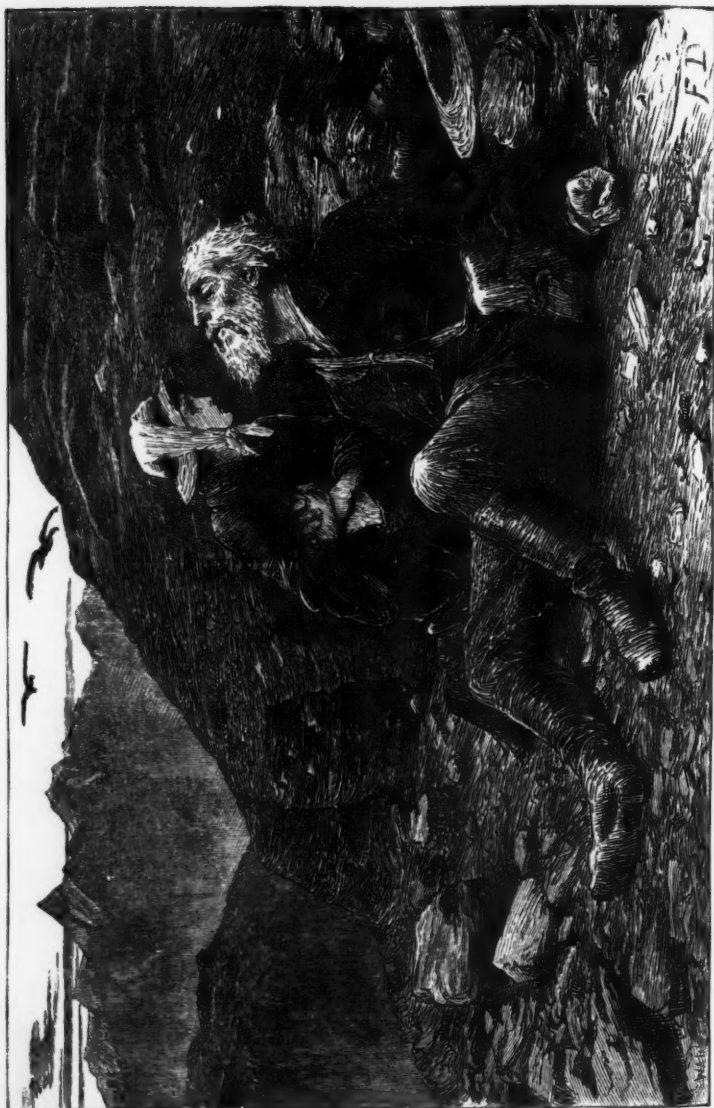
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I KNEW HIM BEFORE HIM AND TOOK HIS NAME.



I KNEW HIM BEFORE HIM AND TOOK HIS NAME.